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ANTIOCH the REVIEW

SUMMER '59

The Philosopher's Alice In Wonderland
ROGER W. HOLMES

American Intellectuals and American Democracy
WILLIAM G. CARLETON

Pragmatism and Existentialism
SIDNEY HOOK

Conversation on Santayana
A REMINISCENCE

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Editor's Shop Talk

One of the many charms of Roger W. Holmes's introduction to philosophy which opens this issue is that, while he may imply it, he does not use the phrase, "*Alice in Wonderland* has delighted generations of children." We are tired of the phrase—hardly a Book Week can pass without someone hurling it at us. Besides, we don't believe it.

We have read Alice to one generation of children and "delighted" is not exactly the verb we would use. "Tolerated," certainly; "interested," perhaps; but not "delighted." *Stuart Little* delighted. So did *Mary Poppins*. And if we remember our own generation as a child honestly (which is not always easy), we must admit that *Doctor Doolittle* delighted more than *Alice*.

Much of *Alice*, we fear, is foreign to contemporary American eight-year-olds. Some may assign characters to playing cards, but we imagine few are on familiar enough terms with chessmen to identify with them. Such words as "treacle," "bathing machine," and "comfits"—to pick a few of Lewis Carroll's at random—are not in the lexicon of today's American child. Many of the puns and witticisms, to say nothing of the parodies, are aimed at a higher level of sophistication than is found in the third grade. In fact, many of the *Alice* characters have supplanted the originals that gave them their initial humor—Father William, the Mad Hatter, the Cheshire Cat, even the Mock Turtle.

Why, then, did we and millions of

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parents like us continue to read *Alice In Wonderland* to our semi-comprehending young—not only that, but go on to *Through the Looking-Glass* too? (We will ignore, as best we can, the vivisections of the Disney Studios on these sturdy classics.) We read them to our children simply because they continue to delight generations of parents.

The true classic, as well as being timeless, is multi-levelled, a source of entertainment for the weary reader as well as the tireless listener. After the years of "Farmer John's Farm" and "The Puppy Who Lost His Bark," parents stumble upon something like *Winnie-the-Pooh* or some other multi-level book, an oasis in the monosyllabic desert. From there it is but a jump to *Charlotte's Web, Tom Sawyer, Treasure Island,* and the rest. There are so few classics like this, barely enough for the few years before the dependent listener becomes the independent reader. Who can blame us if, perhaps, we push a bit faster than we should? Who can gauge accurately the delicate balance each book demands—the moment it will be most fully enjoyed, yet is short of the time it will be rejected as "kid's stuff"? Maybe the true classic is timeless in this sense, too; maybe no children's book is truly appreciated until read to one's own children

* * *

From *Alice in Wonderland*—or through *Alice in Wonderland*—we come to philosophy. Several articles from the *Review* have recently been translated and republished in Japanese by the U.S. Information Service. Sidney Hook's "Pragmatism and Existentialism" (page 151) is the first one we have published *after* the Japanese translation for which it was originally written. We think it will be interesting to Americans, too.

Social philosophy is also with us in William G. Carleton's "American Intellectuals and American Democracy" (page 185) and Sanford Cohen's "A Government Policy for Labor" (page 205). And political philosophy can scarcely be discussed these days without reference to Boris Pasternak. By this time, American quarterlies must have devoted more words to *Doctor Zhivago* than are found in the novel itself. We do not claim that Richard Howard Powers' "Ideology and *Doctor Zhivago*" (page 224) is the final pronouncement on the book, or even that it represents our official editorial judgement, whatever that may be. But we think it a worthwhile viewpoint, with implications wider than much of the current debate has pointed up. And we know the debate will continue.

* * *

Two of the participants in the "Conversation on Santayana" (page 237), which is more biography than philosophy, will be represented in our fall issue on John Dewey, which will be more philosophy than biography. This is the Dewey Centennial year, and Horace M. Kallen and Ernest Nagel are preparing articles for our special issue, "John Dewey in Perspective." Also on hand will be articles by Morton White, Sidney Ratner, and Francis Villemain and Nathaniel Champlin.

The Philosopher's Alice In Wonderland

By ROGER W. HOLMES

■ Have you ever seen Nobody? What would your world be like if objects had no names? Can you remember what will happen week after next? How many impossible things can you believe before breakfast—*if* you hold your breath and shut your eyes? These questions transport us to the world of Lewis Carroll: to Wonderland, with the White Rabbit and the Mock Turtle and the pool of tears and the Mad Hatter's tea party; to the Looking-Glass country, with its Garden of Insects and the Jabberwocky and the Walrus and the Carpenter and shoes and ships and sealing-wax and cabbages and kings. They also transport us to the realm of Philosophy.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and *Through the Looking-Glass* belong most obviously and particularly to children, whether in nurseries or bomb-shelters. We can never forget Mrs. Miniver reading aloud to her children while enemy planes roared overhead:

> Lastly, she pictured to herself how this same little sister of hers would, in the after-time, herself be a grown woman; how she would keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood; and how she would gather about her other little children, and make *their* eyes bright and eager with many a strange tale, perhaps even with the dream of Wonderland of long ago; and how she would feel with all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in all their simple joys, remembering her own child-life, and the happy summer days.

ROGER W. HOLMES, Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at Mount Holyoke College, is the author of *The Rhyme of Reason*, *The Idealism of Giovanni Gentile*, *Exercises in Logic and an Outline of Logic*, and articles in both popular and professional journals. He is active in educational FM and TV work in Massachusetts and, in addition, he recently invented and built an electronic machine which tests truth functions of up to five variables in the field of symbolic logic.

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Few who step through the magic mirror into the Looking-Glass country realize that its landscape is a chessboard and its events part of a chess problem: "White Pawn (Alice) to play, and win in seven moves." Still fewer know that both Wonderland and the Looking-Glass country belong to the logician and the philosopher as much as to parents and children. These regions are crowded with the problems and paraphernalia of logic and metaphysics and theory of knowledge and ethics. Here are superbly imaginative treatments of logical principles, the uses and meanings of words, the functions of names, the perplexities connected with Time and Space, the problem of personal identity, the status of substance in relation to its qualities, the mind-body problem.

Sometimes Lewis Carroll presents his readers with an amusing logical absurdity, as when the Duchess in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* produces, "Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise" in her attempt to "put more simply" her exhortation to Alice to "be what you would seem to be." Or he merely touches ideas playfully, as in the Cheshire Cat's proof that he is mad:

> [Alice] "And how do you know that you're mad?"
> "To begin with," said the Cat, "a dog's not mad. You grant that?"
> "I suppose so," said Alice.
> "Well, then," the Cat went on, "you see a dog growls when it's angry, and wags its tail when it's pleased. Now *I* growl when I'm pleased, and wag my tail when I'm angry. Therefore I'm mad."

This may not be good logic, but it has philosophic implications.

Sometimes he finds an unforgettable illustration of a major principle. We know that if all apples are red, it does not follow that all red things are apples: the logician's technical description of this is the non-convertability *simpliciter* of universal propositions. The Hatter at the famous tea party has just proposed the provokingly incomplete riddle about the raven and the writing desk. The March Hare says to Alice:

> "Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?"
> "Exactly so," said Alice.
> "Then you should say what you mean," the March Hare went on.

"I do," Alice hastily replied; "at least—at least I mean what I say—that's the same thing you know."

"Not the same thing a bit!" said the Hatter. "Why, you might just as well say that 'I see what I eat' is the same thing as 'I eat what I see'!"

"You might just as well say," added the March Hare, "that 'I like what I get' is the same thing as 'I get what I like'!"

"You might just as well say," added the Dormouse, which seemed to be talking in its sleep, "that 'I breathe when I sleep' is the same thing as 'I sleep when I breathe'!"

"It *is* the same thing with you," said the Hatter.

The Dormouse goes back to sleep, but logic comes to life.

Most often he uses the absurd hilarity of Wonderland to bring difficult technical concepts into sharp focus; and for this gift teachers of logic and philosophy have unmeasured admiration and gratitude. One need not try to do division with Roman numerals to appreciate the value of including the zero among numbers, even though zero counts nothing. In the related field of logic the null class, the class without members, is as useful but more difficult to explain. The class of female presidents of the United States is a genuine class, but as a simple matter of empirical fact it is as of 1959 a class without members. Lewis Carroll reminds us that we often refer to this curious but important logical entity. The White King is waiting for his messengers and asks Alice to look along the road to see if they are coming:

"I see nobody on the road," said Alice.

"I only wish *I* had such eyes," the King remarked in a fretful tone. "To be able to see Nobody! And at that distance too! Why, it's as much as I can do to see real people, by this light."

This is amusing and, without benefit of logic, it is also confusing. When the messenger finally arrives, several pages later, confusion is doubly confounded:

"Who did you pass on the road?" the King went on. . . .

"Nobody," said the Messenger.

"Quite right," said the King; "this young lady saw him too. So of course Nobody walks slower than you."

"I do my best," the Messenger said in a sullen tone. "I'm sure nobody walks much faster than I do!"

"He can't do that," said the King, "or else he'd have been here first."

"Nobody" may stand for no person, but you had better be careful how you talk about him!

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The logician in Lewis Carroll was fascinated by words. In the poem about the Jabberwocky, "T'was brillig and the slithy toves, did gyre and gimble in the wabe . . ." words are used as portmanteaus; Humpty-Dumpty explained: "mimsy" meant both *miserable* and *flimsy*, packing in two meanings at once. Of all words, name-words have given the philosopher and the logician most trouble. No one (remember him?) knew this better than Lewis Carroll. Alice has just boasted to the Gnat that she can name the insects:

> "Of course they answer to their names?" the Gnat remarked carelessly.
>
> "I never knew them to do that."
>
> "What's the use of their having names," the Gnat said, "if they won't answer to them?"
>
> "No use to *them*," said Alice, "but it's useful to the people that name them, I suppose. If not, why do things have names at all?"

Why, indeed? Medieval philosophers fought bitterly about this. Alice seems to be a Nominalist, suggesting that names are tags by which we can conveniently denote objects without having to point. But a few pages later she comes to the Wood-where-things-have-no-names and quickly discovers what the Medieval Realists knew: that names have a connotation as well as a denotation. She meets a fawn and, since the fawn cannot in this magic place remember that Alice is a "child," he allows her to pet him and put her arm around his neck, as in the famous illustration by Tenniel. As soon as they reach the edge of the wood the fawn darts away in fright. So names are more than tags: they convey information. Such a wood evokes fascinating philosophic speculation. Suppose we could remember no names. Not only would it be impossible to communicate with anyone about objects except by pointing, but also we should be unable to generalize and should have to rely entirely on conditioned responses. The fawn might still be afraid of Alice *if* it had experienced children; but Alice could have no rational knowledge, could not be human in the usual sense.

Humpty-Dumpty is a Realist when he asks Alice what her name means. "*Must* a name mean something?" Alice asks doubtfully. "Of course it must," Humpty-Dumpty said with a short laugh: "*my* name means the shape I am—and a good handsome

shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost." But our egghead friend shows a Nominalist tendency a little later when the advantage of Un-birthdays comes under discussion and he points out how nice it would be to get Un-birthday presents 364 days of the year rather than birthday presents only once. "That's glory for you," he says.

> "I don't know what you mean by 'glory,'" Alice said.
>
> Humpty-Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't—till I tell you. I mean 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you!'"
>
> "But 'glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument,'" Alice objected.
>
> "When *I* use the word," Humpty-Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."
>
> "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."
>
> "The question is," said Humpty-Dumpty, "which is to be the master—that's all."

A little later Humpty-Dumpty gets impatient and uses the word "impenetrability" to mean, "We've had enough of that subject, and it would be just as well if you'd mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don't mean to stop here all the rest of your life." When Alice observes that that is a great deal to make one word mean, our learned egg closes the argument by saying: "When I make a word do a lot of work like that I always pay it extra. You should see them come around to me on a Saturday night, for to get their wages, you know." The problem raised here is of the first importance to philosophy. *May* we, like Humpty-Dumpty, make our words mean whatever we choose them to mean? One thinks of a Soviet delegate using "democracy" in a U.N. debate. May we pay our words extra, or is this the stuff that propaganda is made of? Do we have an obligation to past usage? In one sense words are our masters, or communication would be impossible. In another, we are the masters; otherwise there could be no poetry.

The most complex discussion of the function of words takes place between Alice and the White Knight when the latter offers to sing Alice a song. This passage is a classic. The Knight announces that the name of the song "is called 'Haddock's Eyes'" and the following famous conversation ensues:

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"Oh, that's the name of the song, is it?" Alice said, trying to feel interested.

"No, you don't understand," the Knight said, looking a little vexed. "That's what the name is *called*. The name really *is* 'The Aged Aged Man.' "

"Then I ought to have said, 'That's what the song is called,' " Alice corrected herself.

"No, you oughtn't: that's quite another thing! The song is called 'Ways and Means': but that's only what it's *called*, you know!"

"Well, what *is* the song, then?" said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered.

"I was coming to that," the Knight said. "The song really *is* 'A-sitting On A Gate.' "

The issues it raises are technical and abstract, but not without excitement. Pause and analyze the situation which the White Knight describes. There are two things involved, the name of the song and the song itself. Of the name it can be said (a) what the name *is*, (b) what the name *is called*. And of the song itself it can be said (a) what *the song* is, and (b) what *the song* is called.

Start with the name. John Keats is named *John*, but this is not necessarily what the name is called. If I were to introduce Keats ("This is John Keats") I should be doing two things. In the first place I should be giving his name, and in the second I should be telling what symbol we use for his name in English. On the Piazza Espagna in Rome there is a tablet saying that a certain *Giovanni* Keats died in an adjacent building. Surely "Giovanni" is what Italians *call* Keats's first name! Does it not follow that "John" is what Keats's countrymen call it? What *is* his name? John? Giovanni? Johann? Ian? Or something to which all these refer? You might be perplexed if asked whether you enjoyed the music of Joseph Green, but this recalls the composer of *La Traviata* quite as surely as Giovanni Keats is the author of the "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

The perplexity about Keats can be resolved patriotically by assigning the symbol used in the country-of-birth as *the* name. Keats's given name is John; all others are what the name is called by Auslanders. But what about common nouns? A thing like a twenty-four hour interval has no birthplace, no country. It is variously referred to as "day" or "*jour*" or "*Tag*" or "*giorno*" or any of a large number of symbols. What about the name itself of what we call "d-a-y"? Clearly it has no name. But *it itself* is called "day"

or "*jour*" or whatnot and we are immediately in the White Knight's second major division, things and what things are called. If we are to believe the White Knight, we can be sure that classes of things, such as twenty-four hour periods, are not called by their names!

The word "call" is ambiguous. We call a person by name or nickname: if I had known Keats intimately I might *call* him "Jack." In another sense I describe him to someone else; then I *call* him "England's greatest romantic poet" or "one whose name is writ in water." The first illustrates what a name is called, and is the arbitrary assigning of a tag to an individual. The second is an example of what a thing is called, and now information is conveyed. You might say that Keats was so many inches tall; he could then be called a man of such-and-such a stature. You might call a day a period of so many minutes, or a pebble on the beach of Time. Here is essentially the difference between a dictionary and an encyclopedia: the one gives information about names, the other provides data about things. Except, as the White Knight made clear, the items in a dictionary are not properly names at all!

We come, finally, to the thing itself. And here Lewis Carroll was definitely pulling our leg. The White Knight said that the song he was singing *was* "A-sitting On A Gate"—but remember that that was not its name! It was not even what the thing was called—a sad song or a lengthy one. What could it be, if it is neither the name of the song nor a description of the song? It could only be *the thing itself*. The nearest we can come to it is to point or shout—"this" or "that" or "Hey, you!" Recall the Beaver in *The Hunting of the Snark*, who had forgotten his name.

> He would answer to "Hi" or to any loud cry,
> Such as "Fry me!" or "Fritter my wig!"
> To "What-you-may-call-um!" or "What was his name!"
> But especially "Thing-um-a-jig!"

To be consistent, the White Knight, when he had said that the song *is* . . ., could only have burst into the song itself. Whether consistent or not, the White Knight is Lewis Carroll's cherished gift to logicians.

One more passage in *Through the Looking-Glass* delights the logician. The White Queen has just told Alice she is exactly one hundred and one, five months, and a day.

"I can't believe *that*!" said Alice.

"Can't you?" the Queen said in a pitying tone. "Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes."

Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said, "one *can't* believe impossible things."

"I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for a half-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

Can one believe impossible things? If I told you I had seen an eagle whose markings were an exact replica of the American flag you might say, "Impossible!" But you would be wrong. Such a bird is only improbable. You could believe in the existence of such a creature any time of day if the evidence were sufficiently persuasive—and it might be. But if I told you I had in my pocket a fine example of a round square you would again say, "Impossible!" and this time you would be right. No matter how long you hold your breath, or how early you make the effort, it is both true and significant that you cannot believe impossible things. Much can be said about this built-in rejector of the illogical. Without it we should be as desperately zany as the White Queen.

The wealth of material which Lewis Carroll presents for the illuminating of philosophy is almost without end. In Wonderland, for example, a baby turns gradually into a pig. Could there be a more telling illustration of the importance of causes, or of their significance? Wonderland was also a place where it was always tea-time. The Mad Hatter had recited a poem at the Queen's party and she had shouted that he was murdering time ("Off with his head!") and ever since then it had remained six o'clock. Can one discuss Time as a metaphysical dimension without reference to this party? And the Looking-Glass country had its peculiarities too. For one thing, time went backwards—but more about Time later. It was also a place where space presented problems. When Alice walked into the garden from the Looking-Glass house she discovered that she could only get to a hill which she saw in the distance by walking in the opposite direction. Alice had a hectic encounter with the Red Queen when she learned that they must run as fast as they could to stay in one place, and twice as fast to get anywhere else. These instances, like many in the Mary Poppins

books, raise questions of the nature of the world in which we live and are a delight to the student of metaphysics. Dorothy Thompson devoted one of her best columns to the trial of the Jack of Hearts in the final chapter of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, showing with devastating effect its similarities to legal procedures in Hitler's Germany, and raising one of the philosopher's favorite subjects, Justice. Alice wondered what happens to the flame of a candle when the candle is put out, while she was shutting up like a telescope during her first adventure in Wonderland, wondered whether she would go out altogether—"like a candle." The Pre-Socratics enjoyed that problem. What *does* happen to the flame?

Some of the philosophic problems are perennial. In her bewilderment at the sudden changes in her size and the conversations with a unique rabbit who wore a vest and gloves and carried a watch, Alice asks herself, "Who in the world am I? Ah, that is the great puzzle." And it is one of the greatest of philosophic puzzles, the problem of personal identity. Alice began thinking over all the children she knew that were of the same age as herself, to see if she could have changed for any of them. She could not be Ada, for Ada's hair went in such long ringlets (Materialism). She could not be Mabel, for Alice knew all sorts of things and Mabel knew so very little (Idealism). Multiplication table? $4 \times 5 = 12$. $4 \times 6 = 13$. Oh dear! Geography? London is the capital of Paris, Paris is the capital of Rome. *That's* all wrong. "How doth the little—crocodile." None of this was right: she could not be Mabel. Alice came to the comforting conclusion that she would not do anything her grown-ups commanded until they could tell her who she was. Here is domestic subversion for which philosophy is the only cure.

The Cheshire Cat offers perplexities. You will remember that he possessed an ability unique among cats. He could disappear, leaving his smile behind. Shades of all discussions of substance and its accidents! Here is a smile without a head. The animal has the fascination of a nightmare: he belongs to a different universe. This feline had another disturbing practice: it would appear and disappear—gradually—starting with the tip of its tail and ending with its smile, or *vice versa*. This is not so alarming. We belong to such a world. We have seen dry ice disappear; we have seen crystals come into existence. The disappearing stunt is mentioned because it

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provides later in the Wonderland book an argument amusingly similar to William James' famous illustration of the meaning of Pragmatism.

If a man walks around a tree on which there is a squirrel who never turns his back on the man, does the man walk around the squirrel? The Cheshire Cat has been bold enough to offend the King and the King asks the Queen to have it removed, whereupon she applies her universal panacea, "*Off with his Head*!" When Alice arrived on the scene a considerable argument was under way involving the King, the Queen, and the executioner. The cat's head, minus body, was an interested spectator.

> The executioner's argument was that you couldn't cut off a head unless there was a body to cut it off from: that he had never had to do such a thing before, and he wasn't going to begin at his time of life.
>
> The King's argument was that anything that had a head could be beheaded, and that you weren't to talk nonsense.
>
> The Queen's argument was that, if something wasn't done about it in less than no time, she'd have everybody executed all round. (It was this last remark that had made the whole party look so grave and anxious.)

William James would have solved this problem by defining the meaning of "behead," as he so helpfully centered attention on "walk around" in the case of the squirrel. The Cheshire Cat unphilosophically dodged the issue by disappearing altogether, leaving the King and the executioner running wildly up and down while the rest of the party went back to the croquet game.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland contains fewer references to philosophy than does *Through the Looking-Glass*. After the success of the former, Lewis Carroll may have been more conscious of his approach in the sequel. It would be stretching a point to find Plato's moral universe in the Duchess's annoying habit of prefacing each of her remarks with "And the moral of *that* is. . . ." And it would be unfair to lay stress on the Mock Turtle's remark that no wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise. When Alice asked about this the Mock Turtle replied, "Why if a fish came to *me*, and told me he was going for a journey, I should say 'With what porpoise?' " Read a teleological metaphysics into this if you wish. But when in *Through the Looking-Glass* the White Knight has fallen

off his horse for the *n*th time and is resting peacefully head-downwards, talking with Alice:

> "How can you go on talking so quietly, head downwards?" Alice asked, as she dragged him out by the feet and laid him in a heap on the bank. The Knight looked surprised at the question. "What does it matter where my body happens to be?" he said. "My mind goes on working all the time."

he shows himself loyal to the Cartesian dualism of Mind and Body, though he has reservations of which Descartes would not have approved: "In fact, the more head-downwards I am, the more I keep inventing things." As, for example, the pudding made out of blotting paper and gunpowder and sealing wax. Surely the advantage of the head-downwards position for inventing things argues an interaction theory.

Another passage of major philosophic interest from the Looking-Glass book has to do with dreams. Tweedledum and Tweedledee and Alice are watching the Red King, who is sleeping fit to snore his head off, as Tweedledum remarked:

> "He's dreaming now," said Tweedledee, "and what do you think he's dreaming about?"
>
> Alice said, "Nobody can guess that."
>
> "Why, about *you*!" Tweedledee explained, clapping his hands triumphantly. "And if he left off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you'd be?"
>
> "Where I am now, of course," said Alice.
>
> "Not you!" Tweedledee retorted contemptuously. "You'd be nowhere. Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream!"
>
> "If that there King was to wake," added Tweedledum, "you'd go out—bang!—just like a candle."
>
> "I shouldn't!" Alice exclaimed indignantly. "Besides if I'm only a sort of thing in his dream, what are *you*, I should like to know?"
>
> "Ditto," said Tweedledum.
>
> "Ditto, ditto!" cried Tweedledee.

The Red King performs the function of God in the philosophy of Bishop Berkeley, for whom the tree in the forest exists when there are no humans to perceive it. To be is to be perceived, ultimately in the mind of God—or the Red King. When Lewis Carroll plays with Idealism in this manner its difficulties are aptly revealed:

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> He shouted this so loud that Alice couldn't help saying, "Hush! You'll be waking him, I'm afraid, if you make so much noise."
>
> "Well, it's no use *your* talking about waking him," said Tweedledum, "when you're only one of the things in his dream. You know very well you're not real."

Here we are at the central problem of philosophy, the problem of the nature of reality, and confronted, as all philosophers are, with the threat of the subjectivity of knowledge (the ego-centric predicament). How can I be sure of the reality of anything except my experiences? Alice invokes a well-recognized criterion of distinguishing between reality and dreams:

> "I am real!" said Alice, and began to cry.
>
> "You won't make yourself a bit realer by crying," Tweedledee remarked; "there's nothing to cry about."
>
> "If I wasn't real," Alice said—half laughing through her tears, it all seemed so ridiculous—"I shouldn't be able to cry."
>
> "I hope you don't suppose those are real tears?" Tweedledum interrupted in a tone of great contempt.

If we all exist in the mind of Berkeley's God, just as Alice and Tweedledum and Tweedledee existed in the slumbering mind of the Red King, tears will exist in God's mind also—and in the Red King's dream. Tweedledum was so good a philosopher as to see that Bishop Berkeley has the final word here.

Alice thought she had a good point. Dreams are usually less orderly than waking experiences: in fact, the fascination of dreams is that laws are broken with delightful unexpectedness. Fundamentally, this is the fascination underlying both of Lewis Carroll's books, for in both Alice wakes up from sleep in the final chapter. In a dream, Alice argued, crying might not produce tears (though the reader remembers that it had produced a whole pool of them in Wonderland!), and since there were tears she might not be part of the Red King's dream. But what if dreams are orderly? Is there escape from this subjectivism? The problem is ancient and has many facets. We leave it suspended in doubtfulness as Lewis Carroll left it and as it has been left, I believe, by the entire history of philosophy.

Lewis Carroll is at his best when he considers Time. The Looking-Glass country was a place in which time moved backwards.

Through a playful reference to memory, he approaches the curious character of Looking-Glass punishment:

> "What sort of things do *you* remember best?" Alice ventured to ask.
>
> "Oh, things that happened the week after next," the Queen replied in a careless tone. "For instance, now," she went on, sticking a large piece of plaster on her finger as she spoke, "there's the King's Messenger. He's in prison now, being punished; and the trial doesn't even begin till next Wednesday; and of course the crime comes last of all."
>
> "Suppose he never commits the crime?" said Alice.
>
> "That would be all the better, wouldn't it?" the Queen said, as she bound the plaster around her finger with a bit of ribbon.
>
> Alice felt there was no denying *that*. "Of course it would be all the better," she said, "but it wouldn't be all the better his being punished."
>
> "You're wrong *there*, at any rate," said the Queen. "Were you ever punished?"
>
> "Only for faults," said Alice.
>
> "And you were all the better for it, I know!" the Queen said triumphantly.
>
> "Yes, but then I *had* done the things I was punished for," said Alice, "that makes all the difference."
>
> "But if you hadn't done them," the Queen said, "that would have been better still, better, and better, and better."

Alice was sure there was a mistake somewhere. It reminds one of the story about the irate father who spanked his son for fighting. When the boy insisted he had not been in a fight the father replied, as he continued to apply the hairbrush, that even if he had not been in one that day he was sure to be in one soon. Unless we take this parent's alarming attitude toward "punishment," we are as much disturbed as Alice about punishment coming before the crime. How could the Mikado make the punishment fit the crime in such a world?

It just does not make sense. Punishment exists in a Bergsonian time-with-direction. As everyone knows who has seen movies run backwards, most human actions so lose their significance when reversed as to appear hilarious. One of the standard amusements in the nickelodeon days was to run backward a film of a man eating steak. Bergson had much to say about memory: he must have been amused at the Queen's remark that she remembered best things that happened the week after next. Past and future are not interchangeable, as is clearly illustrated later in the story, when Alice

and the King and the Lion and the Unicorn sit down to enjoy a cake which Alice is asked to cut:

> Alice had seated herself on the bank of a little brook, with the great dish on her knees, and was sawing away diligently with the knife. "It's very provoking!" she said, in reply to the Lion. "I've cut several slices already, but they always join on again!"
>
> "You don't know how to manage Looking-Glass cakes," the Unicorn remarked. "Hand it around first, and cut it afterwards."
>
> This sounded nonsense, but Alice very obediently got up, and carried the dish around, and the cake divided itself into three pieces as she did so.
>
> "Now cut it up," said the Lion, as she returned to her place with the empty dish.

Alice sat down puzzled, not only because she had no cake herself, but also because it would be extremely difficult to cut no cake. Even our old friend the null class does not help in this situation. The cutting of a cake is an action that looks greedily to the future; reverse it and you get nonsense as well as no cake. Bergson is vindicated.

While we are considering Time, there is one Looking-Glass event that deserves special attention. It has to do with the plaster that the White Queen had applied to her finger while she was expounding the theory of punishment in her world. Alice was interrupted in her objections to this theory by the screams of the Queen:

> "Oh, oh, oh!" shouted the Queen, shaking her hand as if she wanted to shake it off. "My finger's bleeding! Oh, oh, oh!"
>
> Her screams were so exactly like the whistle of a steam-engine that Alice had to hold both her hands over her ears.
>
> "What *is* the matter?" she said, as soon as there was a chance of making herself heard. "Have you pricked your finger?"
>
> "I haven't pricked it yet," the Queen said, "but I soon shall—oh, oh, oh!"
>
> "When do you expect to do it?" Alice asked, feeling much inclined to laugh.
>
> "When I fasten my shawl again," the poor Queen groaned out, "the brooch will come undone directly. Oh, oh!" As she said the words the brooch flew open, and the Queen clutched wildly at it, and tried to clasp it again.
>
> "Take care!" cried Alice. "You're holding it all crooked!" And she caught at the brooch, but it was too late: the pin slipped, and the Queen had pricked her finger.

"That accounts for the bleeding, you see," she said to Alice with a smile. "Now you understand the way things happen here."

"But why don't you scream now?" Alice asked, holding her hands ready to put over her ears again.

"Why I've done all the screaming already," said the Queen. "What would be the good of having it all over again?"

If one denies the Vitalistic significance of a bleeding wound and its repair, this particular incident is more curious than impossible. One *might* live in a world in which the screams and the pain came before the pin prick. Here is reversible time, the time Mechanists insist on, strange only because misunderstood. Within this temporal framework one must eliminate purposeful significances, such as catching at a brooch *in order to* pin it. But such a world is possible: certain philosophers from Democritus through Spinoza to the present have recommended it. The world of the self-dividing cake is not.

One final temporal reference has also to do with the poor disheveled White Queen, who couldn't keep her shawl straight and who had got her brush so tangled in her hair that Alice had to retrieve it for her. Alice said she thought she should have a lady's-maid to take care of her:

"I'm sure I'll take *you* with pleasure!" the Queen said. "Twopence a week, and jam every other day."

Alice couldn't help laughing, as she said, "I don't want you to hire *me*—and I don't care for jam."

"It's very good jam," said the Queen.

"Well, I don't want any *today*, at any rate."

"You couldn't have it if you *did* want it," the Queen said. "The rule is jam tomorrow and jam yesterday—but never jam *today*."

"It *must* come sometime to 'jam today,' " Alice objected.

"No, it can't," said the Queen. "It's jam every *other* day; today isn't any other day, you know."

"I don't understand you," said Alice. "It's dreadfully confusing!"

And so it is. The difficulty is partly the result of one of Lewis Carroll's favorite devices in entertaining children, the play on words. It is also in part the philosophic problem of knowing when the present becomes the past and the future the present. It is the problem with which James was concerned when he described Time as shaped like a saddle. It is the problem that bothers the Idealist when he realizes that he can never know the present: to know it is to

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make it an object of our thinking and hence to put it into the past. Can the present ever be known? Can we ever have jam in the todayness of tomorrow? By its nature tomorrow must come; also, by its very definition, it can never come. The Queen promises Alice jam, but tells her in the same words that she can never have it! Here is one of the famous paradoxes connected with Time.

The delight afforded by Lewis Carroll to logicians and philosophers, as well as to children and parents, is rare and brilliant and inexhaustible. You will enjoy re-reading *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* and finding other riches. You would do well, for example, to consider the Dormouse's wonderful story about the three sisters who lived at the bottom of a treacle well—and were well in. They were learning to draw and "they drew all manner of things—everything that begins with an M, such as mouse-traps, and the moon, and memory, and muchness." Have you ever tried to draw memory or muchness? A whole aesthetic theory could begin with this text. Or you might try Alice's encounter with the Wonderland Caterpillar. Or the extraordinary conversation between Alice and the White Queen and the Red Queen at the Looking-Glass banquet.

And do not stop with these two books. The world of Lewis Carroll is more extensive than most travelers in it realize. Less familiar, though unforgettable once visited, is the wild region of the Snark and the Boojum and the Bellman's problem with the bowsprit that got mixed with the rudder sometimes, in *The Hunting of the Snark*. The more conventional land of *The Story of Sylvie and Bruno* and the amusing architecture of Lewis Carroll's logic exercises are now seldom included in an itinerary. There is even a vacation spot for students of government, the little-known *The Dynamics of a Parti-cle*, involving plain superficiality, obtuse anger, and acute anger (the inclination of two voters to one another whose views are not in the same direction); a world in which a speaker may digress from one point to another, a controversy be raised about any question and at any distance from that question. *Parti-cles* are divided into genius and speeches, and a *surd* is a radical whose meaning cannot be exactly ascertained. Lewis Carroll, when he stepped back into the real world, was Charles Dodgson, who taught

mathematics to men and logic to women at Oxford. A serious contribution to the field of logic is characteristically entitled *What Achilles Said to the Tortoise.*

When Alice told her sister all her strange adventures, her sister said:

> "It *was* a curious dream, dear, certainly; but now run to your tea; it's getting late."
>
> So Alice got up and ran off, thinking while she ran, as well she might, what a wonderful dream it had been.

None more wonderful. If this essay has any porpoise it is to send you, the reader, to the pleasures of philosophy and logic by way of the unique fascination of Lewis Carroll. And do not get caught in the elusiveness of Alice's jam. Do not promise yourself the delights of philosophy tomorrow. Enjoy them now: take Lewis Carroll down from the shelf tonight.

The Ticket

By CHARLES BLACK

Walking toward home, I turned down Willow Street.
I saw my car. God damn! A ticket tied
To the windshield wiper! Well, I should have known
You couldn't park it overnight.
Up closer
I saw it was just a brown leaf that had fallen
And stuck behind the blade.
(I got your summons.
Of course you'll nail me in the end. Be warned
I'll fight the case. And you'll have to send and get me.)

The poems of CHARLES BLACK, who is a teacher in New Haven, Connecticut, have appeared in a long list of little magazines. His "Ancient Poet in a Print" was published in the *Review* last fall.

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My Friend, My Friend

By ANNE SEXTON

For M.W.K. who hesitates each time she sees a young girl wearing The Cross.

Who will forgive me for the things I do?
With no special legend or God to refer to,
With my calm white pedigree, my yankee kin,
I think it would be better to be a Jew.

I forgive you for what you did not do.
I am impossibly guilty. Unlike you,
My friend, I can not blame my origin
With no special legend or God to refer to.

They wear The Crucifix as they are meant to do.
Why do their little crosses trouble you?
The effigies that I have made are genuine,
(I think it would be better to be a Jew).

Watching my mother slowly die I knew
My first release. I wish some ancient bugaboo
Followed me. But my sin is always my sin.
With no special legend or God to refer to.

Who will forgive me for the things I do?
To have your reasonable hurt to belong to
Might ease my trouble like liquor or aspirin.
I think it would be better to be a Jew.

And if I lie, I lie because I love you,
Because I am bothered by the things I do,
Because your hurt invades my calm white skin:
With no special legend or God to refer to,
I think it would be better to be a Jew.

ANNE SEXTON has been writing for little more than a year, but her poetry has appeared in *The Fiddlehead, The Beloit Poetry Journal, The Compass Review,* and *The New Orlean Poetry Journal.*

Pragmatism and Existentialism

By SIDNEY HOOK

■ Pragmatism is a philosophy usually associated with the United States; and, like the United States itself, it is comparatively unknown, radically misunderstood, and often criticized on false or inadequate grounds. All sorts of misconceptions prevail about the nature of pragmatism, and at home as well as abroad. Sometimes it is regarded merely as a social philosophy which stresses action for its own sake. Sometimes it is regarded as a sort of business philosophy: according to the Communists and their sympathizers, the "ideology of American imperialism"—whatever that may be. Yet, broadly speaking, pragmatism as understood by its chief proponents, Charles Peirce, William James, and John Dewey, is primarily an extension of the logic and ethics of scientific inquiry. In fact, I offer this as the best capsule definition of the ambiguous term "pragmatism."

I shall consider briefly the philosophy as a theory of meaning and then as a theory of truth. As a theory of meaning, pragmatism is best and most simply presented in terms of its theory of ideas.

What is an idea? According to the pragmatists, an idea is not an image. If an idea were an image it would follow at once that no one could share ideas. For images are private and personal, psychological events in somebody's mind. An idea or meaning,

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This article, with some slight changes, is the transcript of a talk delivered by SIDNEY HOOK before a joint meeting of the Japanese Society for the Study of American Philosophy and the Association for the Philosophy of Existence, under the auspices of the Japan Cultural Forum, in Tokyo, September 20, 1958. It was translated into Japanese, sentence by sentence, as he spoke. Professor Hook—well-known philosopher, writer, and head of the New York University philosophy department—has recently returned from a six-months Ford Fellowship in Asia.

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however, by definition, is something intersubjective and intercommunicable—that is to say, no one can maintain he has a clear and definite idea unless, in principle, it can be communicated to others.

There are two fundamentally different approaches to the notion of an idea. The first approach, exhibited predominantly in the traditional stream of thought in philosophy, is that one can test whether he has an idea or meaning by intuitive means. One looks inside himself to discover whether he has an idea and what it means The only test of the presence of an idea is subjective awareness, a click of certainty through the inner shutter of feeling. Pragmatism rejects this completely. It maintains that the only test of whether or not one has an idea or a clear idea, corresponding to a particular term or expression, is whether one can indicate what the uses of the expression are and what they lead to in the way of specific behavior in specific situations. In other words, according to the pragmatists, an idea is virtually a plan of action. An idea is a virtual plan of action which is always related to a specific problem so that, if you know how an expression is going to be used, and if you know the effects and the behavior patterns involved in acting upon it, then you know what that expression means or what plan of action the idea, which is designated by the expression, commits you to. It is basic to pragmatism that it interprets ideas generically as plans of action, although it recognizes that any particular term or expression which has a history will have a funded meaning that contains reference to memories and previous experiences. Similarly, one can tell whether he shares the same idea with another person to whom one is speaking ultimately only in terms of the possibility of conjoint behavior between them in concrete situations. You understand me well to the extent that you intelligently co-operate with or obstruct my purposes.

Notice two interesting historical things about the pragmatic theory of ideas. In a certain sense, this theory of ideas is derived from the Kantian view that the mind is active in knowing, that it is the principle of activity and not a Lockean *tabula rasa*. In this sense Kant may be regarded as one of the fathers of pragmatism. But as distinct from Kant, Dewey and the pragmatists naturalize the concepts of mind and idea, and construe both mind and its various modes—whether ideas, feelings, or wills—in terms of modern scien-

tific, biological knowledge. From the pragmatic point of view there can be no ideas in the world without human beings. But ideas do not mirror the world. Their function is to enable the organism as a whole to solve the problems which confront it in a world it did not make. Let me say that again. The function of an idea is to enable the organism, living in a certain *culture* at a certain *historical* time, to solve problems that confront it in a world which man did not create although, within limits, he has altered and can alter it. On the one hand, Dewey and the pragmatists recognize the principle of meaningful activity as the specific expression of mentality; and on the other hand, they interpret these and all other mental acts in terms of verifiable operations on the part of the organism. They are broadly behavioristic in the Aristotelian sense, not in the sense of the reductive materialism of J. B. Watson.

If this is what pragmatism means by an idea, what does pragmatism mean by a "true" idea? What is its conception of truth? The answer is: a true idea is one whose consequences, when the operations which constitute its meaning are carried out, are such that they are confirmed by experience, enabling us to solve the problem in relation to which the idea was projected as a plan of action.

In other words, the pragmatic theory of truth may be called the *experimental* theory of truth. And if you ever want to test your knowledge of pragmatism, I suggest that you translate the pragmatic theory of truth into the idiom or language of the experimental theory of truth, which asserts that every statement of fact about the world of nature, society, and man is a statement whose truth ultimately depends upon the outcome of an *experiment* of some kind.

It is important to observe the implications of this experimental theory of truth. For it follows that everything that may be said about the logic of a valid experiment, according to the pragmatists, may also be said about warranted assertions concerning the world. For example, it is elementary but important that in every experiment some action is performed. Suppose I say: "This is paper." Now, you may ask, "What is the experiment? How can I test the truth of the assertion?" Well, for one thing you cannot suck the truth out of your finger tips. You cannot merely by pure thought convince yourself, "This must be paper." However, I say: "If this

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is paper, then when I write on it, my writing will leave some marks; if I put a match to it, then it will burn, etc." Thus you have a way of telling with a good probability whether your statement is true or false. These are simple kinds of experiments. But, please note, in each case, the experiment introduces behavioral change into the world, so that, in the course of confirming an assertion I have acted upon, and interacted with, the world. I repeat, every time I confirm a truth about the world, I make a change *in* the world. I don't change the entire world, of course. But I must change a part of it to conduct a genuine experiment. The pragmatists assert that this is true not only of theories but even of judgments of perception. "This is the silvery Moon or the coppery Sun," I say. How do I test the truth of such a statement? I change my position, screw my eyes up—I do something to my body which becomes an instrument of perception. In this way, I change the interacting system of energies which defines my position in the world.

This is the first significant thing to bear in mind about the pragmatic or experimental theory of truth.

The second thing to observe is that the theory marks a radical break with the traditional or correspondence theory of truth. How can we have a theory of correspondence when there is no real correspondence—*keine Ubereinstimmung?* What does it mean to say, as Aristotle puts it, that an idea is true if it corresponds or agrees with its object? Can an idea literally correspond or agree with an object? Obviously no; they are entirely different sorts of things. There is no sense in saying, "You can put an idea into correspondence with things," if corespondence suggests resemblance. There is a sense, according to Dewey, in which you can say something corresponds with something else in the way in which, perhaps, a key corresponds with a lock. But a key and a lock do not agree or look alike or resemble each other. The conclusion is that an idea is true, not if it tends to agree with anything, but if it enables you to achieve something: a purpose, an end, or a goal. Or, to put it more technically, it is often assumed, and it has been assumed in the past, that every time we use a word there must be an object which the word names, and when we use a word correctly the word can be put into one-to-one correspondence with some object. But the modern study of language shows that this is a mistake.

There are expressions like "and," "or," "nonetheless," or what we generically call syncategorematic expressions which do not name or designate or correspond with anything. In English, if I say "despite," does "despite" correspond with any particular entity? Obviously not. Yet it has a meaning. The pragmatists assert that judgment no more corresponds with a state of affairs than a term corresponds with an entity. Judgments are controlled intellectual patterns of response which reorganize by experiment existing states of affairs.

The third point is most important of all for the understanding of pragmatism. It is important because almost all critics of pragmatism have misunderstood what pragmatism asserts by the term "practical." What pragmatism means here by the term "practical" is similar to what Marx meant when he criticized Feuerbach for neglecting *prâxis* in his conception of truth. Unfortunately, "practical" in English is sometimes used in the same sense as "useful." Therefore critics of pragmatism, especially Bertrand Russell, assert that since pragmatists have a "practical" theory of truth, they believe that whatever is useful is true, that whatever is literally profitable is true, that whatever helps us to make money is true. That is what we hear about pragmatism all too often from men who should know better. It is not difficult to show that such criticisms, especially those of Bertrand Russell, are a malicious caricature. What pragmatism means by "practical" is nothing more than activity, behavior, experiments, which are not necessarily useful. Pragmatists assert that all thinking is practical and mean by this that all thinking is experimental, that since it is experimental one has to introduce some practical change in things, one has literally to *do* something to and in the world. It does *not* mean that all doing is knowing and all knowing is useful or pleasant.

I shall take an illustration used by John Dewey himself to show how false, how utterly false, is the interpretation of pragmatism according to which it identifies truth with usefulness or truth with what makes you happy (or literally its "cash value" if we misunderstand William James's colorful phrase). Here is the illustration, somewhat altered for purposes of present exposition. Suppose I am very thirsty and I want to drink a glass of water. I am all alone. I reach for the glass of water but at the same time smell and taste

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something peculiar about it. "Oh dear," I say to myself, "this water may be poisoned." I think and I think and I think; but I can never make certain by pure thought whether the water is poisoned or not. I see a bottle nearby labelled "Poison." How do I know that the contents of the glass came from the bottle? The only way ultimately I can tell whether the water is poisoned is by an experiment. I look around. Perhaps I can test it by some chemical means. They are absent. Perhaps on an animal. But there is no animal. Perhaps a friend will come. The macabre idea flits through my mind of testing it on him. But a friend does not come and I am spared the temptation and wickedness. But I must know sooner or later whether it is poisonous or not. I am getting thirstier and thirstier. Finally *I* perform the experiment. I take the glass and *I* drink it. And with my last expiring words I say, "Yes, it was poisoned!" The experiment was successful. But the patient—meaning me—dies. I proved the truth of the proposition. But what was useful or pleasant about it? What have I to be happy about? But the experiment involved activity. It was "practical." The truth was found in "the *prâxis*."

This illustration is a simple case. But when you examine the ways of modern science and the procedures of everyday affairs, whether in physics or technology or life situations, ultimately you will find this is the *basic pattern* by which we test the truth.

This leads me then to a brief statement of the pragmatic theory of man, or what one might call pragmatic philosophical anthropology—"*philosophische Anthropologie*," an oft corrupted form of German philosophy.

On the basis of their theory of meaning and truth, which, I repeat, is primarily an expression of the logic and ethics of modern science, pragmatists assert that man is a part of nature. Man is a natural creature who by using symbols and meanings redirects and transforms within limits the natural and social world. In other words, for pragmatists, man's intelligence is natural, social, and historical. Above all, it is creative. This conception of man differs from the idealistic view which asserts that the whole world is created by man, that the world, so to speak, lies in some mind or Mind—a conception which pragmatists regard as a manifestation of metaphysical conceit, bad logic, and worse psychology. Pragmatists

differ not only with idealists but with the materialistic view that man is a passive creature moulded and pushed from behind by mechanical forces, a slave of physical energy he can never control. Pragmatism is intermediate between the *Wahnsinn*, the insanity, of believing we can create the whole world, including its conditions, and the passivity or cowardice of asserting that we are mere passive creatures or slaves of fate.

I shall speak briefly about the pragmatic theory of human value or ethics before going on to the exposition and criticism of existentialism. Pragmatism maintains that the good in human life is essentially related to human desires, that nothing is good outside an actual or possible human reference. It also points out, however, that not everything desired is desirable. Many things we now want we later discover are not good for us. This is the source of regret. Wisdom consists in living one's life in such a way that regret is reduced to a minimum. Consequently, pragmatism maintains that the good is that which is chosen after reflection and that the good depends upon intelligence. The function of intelligence is to relate the good to the historical nature of man, to his nature as he discovers it to be by reflection and by scientific investigation.

Pragmatism believes that values are relative, not absolute, relative to developing human needs and human desires when they are reflectively considered in an individual and social context. Pragmatism believes, consequently, that values are objective, not subjective. Here as elsewhere it may be called a theory of objective relativism. "Objective relativism—but how is this possible?" you may ask. I will give you a simple illustration. Suppose someone asks, "Is milk good?" To which we reply: What do you mean, is milk good? By itself milk is neither good nor bad. (1) Milk is good in relation to an organism *O*; that is to say, if the organism *O* can flourish by using milk, then milk is good for it. (2) The same milk, however, may be bad is relation to organism *O'* if it is not nourished by milk. Now proposition (1) and proposition (2) are not contradictory, for the first asserts milk is good in relation to *O*, and the second bad in relation to *O'*. They are referring to two different things. Both propositions are true: that is to say, both propositions are objective. Both propositions are also relative. If you ask the pragmatist whether there is anything which is absolutely good for

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everything and anything, for all places and times, he would reply that he does not believe that there is anything of this character. The burden of proof rests on those who assert that such a good exists. The only absolute good for the pragmatist is intelligence, for it is intelligence which enables us to find out what is good for what and for whom, when and where, and to what degree.

Pragmatism leaves open the question of whether morality in addition to being objective is universal. It says that it depends upon whether or not there are common interests or common needs, and whether or not they can be reconstructed, shared, or made common. To the extent that there are common needs or common interests, then morality is not only objective but may become universal. If it turns out that there are no common needs or common interests, then morality will be objective but there will be different moralities, plural moralities. Pragmatism is not dogmatic on this question. It leaves open the possibility of plural moralities.

I want to conclude with a few general remarks about pragmatism and then go on to existentialism. It is sometimes said that pragmatism is an optimistic philosophy, a philosophy of a young nation, a young people. This seems to be a gross oversimplification. For me, pragmatism is not necessarily an optimistic philosophy. What it says is something like this: we live in a world of problems, a world in which there are many evils. Some of them may be unavoidable, many of them are remediable, but which is which we cannot tell until we put to work in the solution of *all* problems the only method which until now has given us the most reliable results, viz., the method of scientific inquiry whose logic and ethics pragmatism strives to articulate. Pragmatism does not offer any guarantee that problems must or will be solved. It leaves guarantees and the quest for certainty to religion and traditional metaphysics. It strives by using intelligence to broaden the horizon of human beings. Its categorical imperative is: make every effort to employ rational, scientific methods in human and social problems before you resign yourself to the great evils of experience.

For me, the philosophy of pragmatism—and here I undoubtedly show temperamental differences from other pragmatists—is based on the tragic sense of life. Why do I say this? Because, as I read experience, I recognize that the self grows by the limitation of possi-

bilities. Indeed, as Peirce says, all development consists in the limitation of possibility. When one looks back on his life, one sees that there are many things that one might have been. In every choice we sin against some other value. It is not only that the better is the enemy of the good, but the good is almost always incompatible with another good. That's the first reason for my belief that the philosophy of pragmatism is based on the tragic sense of life—even when we have chosen most wisely or intelligently. Our natural predicament, morally speaking, is that we must sometimes take one life to save many. This is the paradigm of the human condition.

The second reason is that a good deal of life consists in struggle. Every victory implies a defeat. Every victor is made possible by someone defeated, sometimes by a victim. When one regards the total scene, one cannot help but feel grief for those who did not win, for those who never made it, for those who lost even when they were not altogether undeserving.

Finally, the ideal of perfection transcends all performance. Vision outstrips human reach no matter how many things are achieved. There is always a goal which seems to mock all our efforts. In the end, time and death have a sharp tooth.

Existentialism or *Existenzphilosophie* is a huge and incoherent movement which embraces all sorts of thinkers. Some philosophers trace existentialism back to Pascal, even to Augustine. In our own time we speak of existentialism in the works of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Jaspers, Sartre, Tillich, Marcel, and Nishida. And I suppose that the Zen Buddhists are also existentialists of a sort.

From the pragmatist point of view, there are two fundamental points of similarity with existentialism, which some people think to be more important than their differences. I am not among them.

The first point of agreement between pragmatism and existentialism is that existence is prior to essence. In other words, both movements are anti-Platonic, and take their point of departure from the givenness of experience, of man in a world of time. Instead of trying to derive existence or experience from logic, they recognize that logical distinctions are ultimately derivable from the existential matrix, from nature, history, and culture.

The second point of agreement between pragmatism and

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existentialism is that both recognize that man and the human self are in the foreground of nature and experience. In other words, both recognize that man is a problematic creature, and that he may be defined as a creature who has problems and who is aware of the fact that he has problems.

It seems to me, however, that the differences between pragmatism and existentialism are much more fundamental than their similarities. Speaking for myself, pragmatism criticizes existentialism from three different points of view.

First, although both recognize the importance of problems, pragmatism maintains that one must clarify the question: What is a genuine problem? The pragmatist answers that a genuine problem is always a specific difficulty of a concrete and/or theoretical nature in a finite context. For him there is no such thing as "a problem in general." Nor does he recognize any such thing as *the* problem of the existence of the world as a whole, for even to raise the question is already to presuppose an existing world. Problems exist *within* the world, problems are found *within* experience. But you cannot make an intelligible problem of totality or of everything. The existentialist maintains that the world is absurd because he cannot find an answer to the so-called problem of the existence of the world. The pragmatist says it is absurd to say that the world is absurd. Only human beings can be absurd. The truly absurd thing about the existentialist is that he does not understand the necessity of being clear about the criterion of what constitutes a problem. Without such a criterion, one can make a problem about anything and everything. But something can be a problem only because something else is not a problem, otherwise we could not even recognize the problem and lose ourselves in a vicious *ad infinitum* of pseudo-questions. The fact that a person says that he feels he has a problem is not necessarily evidence that something corresponds to the feeling.

All existentialist philosophers take as their point of departure two famous sentences from Schelling. Schelling asked: *Warum gibt es nicht Nichts? Warum gibt es Etwas?* Why is there not Nothing? Why is there something? Heidegger has repeated these questions. Gabriel Marcel has also agonized over them. They tell us that these questions pose the great ontological mysteries. Well, let me reflect

for a moment on these two questions. Suppose there were Nothing. Then we could ask by the same logic as the existentialists employ, "Why is there Nothing? Why is there not Something?" In other words, no matter what the world was or was not, we could always ask the same question. Nothing could possibly be an adequate answer. But in order to have a genuine problem *in principle*, you must be able to indicate *in advance* what would be a satisfactory or adequate solution or an approach to one. Otherwise we could not recognize the solution if there were one. Some problems may never be solved. But unless we could tell what we would accept as a solution, we have no problem. The pragmatists maintain that the existentialists have not raised a genuine question when they profess to make a problem of the existence of the world as a whole. This is the first point of my criticism and could, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied to many other assertions of the existentialists.

The second point of criticism is of the existentialist theory of knowledge. Some existentialists maintain that they have no theory of knowledge. But all the existentialists I have read, including some of the Zen Buddhists, suggest that they are in possession of a special kind of knowledge—"unique" or "high" or "deep," "penetrating" and "comprehensive"—which is different from ordinary knowledge and different from scientific knowledge. This special knowledge seems to involve in the end an identity of subject and object or a disappearance of one or the other or both. They often proclaim that to know is in the end to be or become what is known. The line of vision disappears between oneself and what is to be known, between the eye and what is seen, and ultimately between the "I" and the "It" or "Thou." This seems to me to be a piece of mystification. In any coherent and intelligible sense of knowledge, it is not necessary *to be* that which *we know*. It is not even necessary to have a direct or immediate experience of what we know. Knowing is not eating; nor is it feeling or dreaming. Knowing is a way of understanding, of interpreting and reorganizing our experiences in the world and making predictions about events. I cite three simple illustrations in which it is clearly false to say that it is necessary to become identical with the object known, or even to have the direct experience of what is known, in order to acquire reliable knowledge.

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If I am a dentist and you are in my dental chair, I can often know which tooth bothers you better than you do yourself. Patients are notoriously mistaken about themselves. You have the pain but you do not have the knowledge. You do indeed have something but *what* it is, is precisely the task of scientific inquiry to discover. If I am a competent dentist I may know what is wrong with you, even if I have not experienced a toothache like yours or a toothache at all. The test of a good dentist is not whether he has had a toothache like yours but solely whether he can cure your toothache.

Second illustration: A woman comes to a doctor and says that she doesn't feel well. She claims she ate something which disagreed with her. The doctor examines her and says, "You are mistaken. You have a feeling, all right, but you don't understand your feeling. What you feel is the movement of a baby in your womb which you have mistaken for something you ate." Now she might say, "Oh, but it is impossible. I remember nothing but what I ate. And after all, how can you tell what it feels like to have a baby? You never had one." It is obvious that a doctor doesn't have to have the experience of having a baby to tell a woman about it. Nor does a male novelist have to be a mother to paint a poignant picture of mother love. As a rule, those who want to bear healthy children consult physicians, not Zen Buddhists.

A final illustration: As far as knowledge is concerned, if one must directly experience the object known as a necessary condition of understanding it, it would follow that before I could maintain that a man was insane, I would have to be insane, too. But it is no more necessary for me to be insane in order to know that a man is insane, than it is necessary for me to be bald in order to know that a man is bald, or be fat in order to know that a man is fat. Knowledge *qua* knowledge is not immediate, but mediate, hypothetical, inferential, evidential. That is why knowledge is only probable, not certain, and why any claim to knowledge may have to be withdrawn in the light of further experience. The existentialists give you the impression that in the end they achieve a total illumination, a complete knowledge in which everything becomes crystal-clear, in which every discrete thing disappears in a total light which is also a total darkness. As I see it, the darkness is there and is almost total: the light is missing.

I come now to my third and most important criticism, which is that the key assertions of existentialism are based on defects in logical analysis. I shall try to show this by examining two central existentialist notions—*Nichts*, or nothing, and *Sein*, or being.

If one examines the writings of existentialists, sooner or later they center their remarks on *Nichts* or Nothing. Before long it turns out that they substantialize Nothing. They make "a something" out of Nothing despite their denial that they are doing this. They make a substance of it either thick or thin. This, I submit, is a result of the failure to see the way in which the word "nothing" actually operates in ordinary discourse. There are three possible meanings that "nothing" can have. "Nothing" may be considered primarily a logical relation, the relation of negation. If I say: "*Nichts ist wahr*, Nothing is true," I mean that every assertion is false. This case is clear. "Nothing" is not a thing; it is not a substance or atmosphere or void or plenum or ether. All it tells us is that some assertion or statement is incompatible with some other assertion or statement. It is a logical relationship even though my reasons for asserting that a statement is true or false may ultimately depend upon some state of affairs. There is little mystery here—only complexity.

Another meaning of "nothing" which is legitimate, in addition to the logical relation of negation, is "other than." Suppose, I say to somebody, "Please give me my wallet; it's in the drawer." He goes to the drawer, searches, and says, "There is nothing here. No wallet. There is paper, pen, cigarettes, letters, but no wallet." "Nothing" here indicates not a special something that is seen or named, but what is inferred from the presence of other things observed. If there were no other things to be seen, we could not say: " 'Nothing' or 'No one' is here." In such contexts, *Nichts* is the "other-than." It may stand for an entire series of "other-thans." Whenever you say, "There is no one home," you mean that the persons who live there are now elsewhere and that each bit of space in the house is occupied by something "other than" the persons asked for. Existentialists are like people who when told: "No one is at home," reply, "Very well, I should like to speak to Mr. No-one."

There is a third meaning of *Nichts* which derives from the psychological experience of disappointment, frustration, anguish,

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and similar phenomena. When someone says, "Nothing is left for me in this world!" or, "My world has come to nothing," we understand the use of the word easily enough. The reference is not to a particular *thing* but to an experience of being bereft, of frustration and loss. Not satisfied with the limited cases of psychological experience in which "nothing" is a word that conveys a feeling of despair, existentialists talk about an *Allumfassendes Nichts*; or, in the well worn illustration from Heidegger, the phrase runs "*Das Nichts nichtet*." Perhaps we can find a new illustration. I recently read in a Zen Buddhist text, "The world is enveloped in a great Emptiness. Even the Emptiness is empty." That may sound very profound, but literally it makes no sense. It is a category mistake, in Ryle's terminology—really a mistake in the basic grammar of the language. It is like saying, to use an illustration from the early Marx, that a man swimming sank because of the weight of the idea of gravitation in his head. It may be that to speak about Emptiness being itself empty is impermissible only in the languages of the West. I defer to the experts here. But if we distinguish between literature and logic, I would say that logically the notion is impermissible no matter what language is used.

As I see it, the existentialists very arbitrarily take a term which has a specifiable meaning or use in a concrete context and blow it up out of all context so that it no longer has an intelligible opposite but functions in a vague emotive way. It stirs the viscera without challenging the understanding. This seems to me to apply to the existentialists, especially the Zen Buddhists, who talk about "the annihilation of the world." Bergson, who has written an interesting and sound analysis of the concept of nothing, says that "annihilation" actually entails "a substitution." When you annihilate or negate any quality in this world, what you are doing is to substitute *another* quality for it. When the existentialists talk about the annihilation of everything which is supposed to be preliminary to Nothing, the truth of the matter is that the phrase "the annihilation of everything" is just like the phrase "round square." It is impossible to annihilate everything. I can annihilate only one thing by substituting another thing for it. In conclusion, what I am saying is that negation is either a logical relation, or a relation of other-than, or a psychological relation. By itself it has no substan-

tiality. Substantialized, it is an illegitimate notion which no one has succeeded in making clear, at least not to me.

This brings me to the analysis of "*Sein*" or "Being." Here not only existentialists, but all metaphysicians, including Aristotle, Aquinas, Hegel among others, have failed to make clear what is *der Sinn des Seins*, the "meaning" of *Sein*. If one reflects upon language, one finds that a principle of significant assertion is that no word has a meaning unless it also has an intelligible opposite. But if you are asked for the opposite of *"Sein,"* you say *"Nicht-Sein."* You are then asked, "Has *Nicht-Sein Sein?"* If it has no *Sein*, then there is nothing. So the answer runs that *Nicht-Sein* is a certain kind of *Sein*. What kind of *Sein*, what kind of being? Now it is clear that (1) Being is not identical with spatio-temporal existence, since there are many terms which refer to things that are not spatio-temporal, *i.e.* memory, propositions, meaning, truth. (2) Being is not identical with the imaginable. There are many things which are unimaginable, and yet they have "being." You can't imagine any number of things which actually exist. You cannot imagine a man walking erect on the other side of the world, *i.e.* a man walking the way we do. Yet men do walk erect at the antipodes. Being, therefore, is not identical with the imaginable. (3) Being is not identical with the conceivable, the logically conceivable. The logically conceivable is merely the same thing as consistency. Finally, (4) Being is not identical with that which is independent of consciousness or of experience. There are some things whose existence depends upon consciousness, or experience, like pains and aches. Therefore, I conclude that the term "Being" or "*Sein*" is intellectually useless. If anyone speaks to us of Being, we should ask him: Being of what—physical, chemical, psychological, artistic, mathematical, social, legal, etc.? There is no intelligible meaning of "Being" over and against other uses of expressions which do not contain the term. It is, in short, a systematically ambiguous expression.

I believe I can point to the source of the error. The fundamental error of the existentialists is of a logical character. And from it there follows their view about *Sein*. They assume that *Sein* or Being is a universal, or an essence which all things, actual or conceivable, have in common. This attempt to discover meaning by asking what all

terms or usages of terms have in common is legitimate enough when applied to many expressions. Even here there are difficulties, as Wittgenstein shows with the term "game." But they all come to a head when we take this approach to Being. For example, suppose I ask what all triangles, equilateral, obtuse, isosceles, have in common. The answer is that they have in common the definition of triangularity, and this may be considered the universal, or essence. What is common to the phrases "white man," "red man," "yellow man," etc.? They have in common the predicate of humanity or, if you prefer, the definition of what it is to be human. Now existentialists assume that Being is also a universal or essence. Tillich, for example, writes: "What is Being itself? What is that which is not a special being, or a group of beings, something not concrete or something abstract, but rather something which is always thought implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, if something is said *to be*?" In another place, he writes: "Ontology asks: What does it mean that something is and is not *not*? What characteristics does everything show that participates in Being?"

Notice that the *form* of his question is like the form of statements: "What have all triangles in common? What have all men in common?" But it is a deceptive and misleading form when asked of all beings because, whereas the concept of triangularity can be distinguished from the concept of non-triangularity, and the concept of human distinguished from the concept of non-human, the concept of being cannot be distinguished from anything else because allegedly it embraces all possible or conceivable things. "Being" is infinite and swallows up genus, species, and differentia in its oceanic vagueness.

My contention is that Being cannot be regarded as an essence or universal and that we do not have to create an ontology to make an adequate reply to a linguistic puzzle or difficulty. If, then, you ask me, "But after all, what in common have such varied and widely disparate things as an electron, at table, a mirage, a pain in the stomach, a storm, an idea, the square root of minus one, a dream, an army, a mistake, a hope, philosophy, soap, salvation, a complex, etc.?" my answer is, "They have nothing in common except that I can talk about them." *They are all objects of discourse.* Objects of discourse are not ontological entities. We can in fact very easily

eliminate the term "being" from the English language and the word "*Sein*" from the German language, although this would undoubtedly distress some philosophers. I ask you: Suppose we were to drop the term—or its translated equivalent—from the Japanese language, what would you be unable to say? My hypothesis is that you could say whatever you wanted to say quite well without it.

If the foregoing analysis is substantially correct, the whole of the existentialist philosophy, insofar as it takes propositional form, is based on a series of logical mistakes concerning the concepts or terms of "*Nichts*" and "*Sein*."

In conclusion, it seems to me that existentialism as a moral philosophy is also inadequate, and viciously inadequate, because of its glorification of the arbitrary and irrational. I shall here, so to speak, have to telegraph my points.

(1) It assumes all ends and values are on the same footing. Therefore, it does not relate values or human ends to our nature, or relate means to ends.

(2) Secondly, it universalizes what we may call the logic of extreme situations, *Grenz-Situationen*, to situations which are not extreme situations calling for heroic or desperate measures but problematic situations, which call for patience, ingenuity, and the systematic use of intelligence.

(3) Even in the so-called *Grenz-Situationen* it overlooks the indispensable role of reason or intelligence. Even though we may not be able to solve problems in extreme situations in which we face death or disaster, we can always understand them better by the use of intelligence, and die if need be in the light rather than in the darkness of ignorance and the hysteria of panic. Nor is death to be considered, as existentialists feel, always an unmitigated evil. Death, too, has its moral uses.

(4) Finally, existentialism truly recognizes the importance of action and commitment. Like pragmatism, it understands that we cannot be neutral in a world where we must choose between the relative freedoms of democracy and the total slavery of communism. Nobody can wash his hands and say, "This struggle does not concern me," because we are all morally responsible for what could be made different by our actions. Even neutrality is an action or commitment—one which helps the enemies of freedom. Pragmatism

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and existentialism agree, then, that one must take a stand. But the pragmatist criticizes the existentialist because, according to the latter, ultimately any stand is as good as any other.

We should welcome the existentialist's declaration that one must take a stand. But you can take a stand on your head or on your feet. You can take a stand on the side of the oppressed or the side of the oppressors, on the side of the victims of the Hungarian massacre or on the side of their Soviet butchers. Pragmatists maintain that existentialists have no basis for a *responsible* action, or for responsible commitment. The existentialist has an inadequate conception both of responsibility and action. It is not action that is important, it is *intelligent* and responsible action, says the pragmatist to the existentialist. We must, of course, choose. We both make ourselves and exhibit our authentic characters in our choices. But choice is the terminal action of a process in which intelligence breaks the routines of habit or tradition in the light of the relevant knowledge of consequences.

This is not the last word the pragmatist addresses to the existentialist, but opening words to start a discussion or dialogue between them.

Dômo arigatô gôzaimasu!

Paean

By SAMUEL MENASHE

That ogre who devours me
Breeds a beast for Beauty—
Moan monster, maw Immense
As my angelic penitence

SAMUEL MENASHE last appeared in the *Review* in the Winter 1956-57 issue. He has taught at Bard College and his poems have appeared in such journals as the *Yale Review*, *Commonweal*, and *Midstream*.

Lichen

By MARK VAN DOREN

Boulder in the meadow, world in the world,
And lichen upon it: field in a field.
On the smooth top there, death's grey grain
Creeping by centuries, circular, small:
Whosoever watches, still but a stain
Spreading in one place, waiting to be all.

Oh, the cold time yet, oh, the slow years
Till granite is covered, and sleep overpowers.
All the great rock there, grim as the world,
Whitened with death's wheat, motionless, mute:
Whatsoever wind, no leaf uncurled;
Whatsoever rain, no sweet green shoot.

Not that it hates this, tightening hold
On the hair of the stone, on the scalp of the world.
Ready for ice cap, ready under drought,
Ready now for nothing or for all, it lies,
Putting invisibly its feelers out
For the last great changes. Lichen is wise.

MARK VAN DOREN's *Autobiography* was published last fall and his first play, *The Last Days of Lincoln*, is scheduled for production next season. He is retiring from teaching at Columbia University this June to devote his entire time to writing.

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Stronger than Minds of Men

By MARK VAN DOREN

Stronger than minds of men—
Almost than His, than His—
Strange, but the learner learns
Only what is, what is.

Learns to lie down one day;
Suffers himself to be bound;
So then the turning, turning,
Cold and slow, around.

Yet after years a pressure,
As of contraction's heat,
Sometimes to the pure center.
There is no name for that.

Nor any name for the turning,
Spread-eagled, upon a sphere
He will be learning, learning,
Until light disappear.

Enemy Cold

By MARK VAN DOREN

My enemy, cold,
Waits into the winter
To show me how cunning
He is, and serious.

Strange, I forget.
I think he has mellowed.
It takes him forever
To kill the good autumn.

But then he is done,
And here I am softer
Than Indian summer,
Than worm in the wainscot;

Here I am dead,
If once he can sting me.
So in by the boarding,
And thin over thresholds,

Crafty, he comes.
Then I double the doorglass;
Stuff the least crevice.
But he is not exiled.

Here he is now;
Is near; he must have me;
And may, some midnight
When I am grown listless.

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The Most Beautiful Apartment in Madrid

By WILMA SHORE

■ We heard of—I'll call him Saul Unterman—through an American businessman whom we had been told to look up in Madrid, and who gave my husband a great deal of advice: how to tip, where to eat, where to sit at the bullfights. "And oh," he said, "you'll want some black market pesetas. I'll give you the name of my own man." The name was Unterman, Saul Unterman.

I remember feeling a kind of pang. Why Unterman? Why not Ruiz? Nothing sharp, nothing painful; just a little pang. It's like this: you grow up with certain mental images, planted or simply dropped in your mind as if by the wind. The shiftless Negro, the drunken Irishman, the stupid Pole. By the time you start calling them *stereotypes*, and trying to pull them out, it's hard; their roots have grown thick and deep. What's worse is that you're never quite sure which to pull; which is the weed of prejudice, which is the flower of truth?

Still, if you are a certain type of liberal, highly-assimilated American Jew, there's one you don't question. Shylock. Oh, he may have existed in Shakespeare's time; and surely we can understand why. But not *now*. That sort of thing is all over *now*.

Then you meet Saul Unterman.

In the center of Madrid there are only broad main arteries and tiny capillaries, dingy, twisting little alleys. At least Saul Unter-

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Like WILMA SHORE's last story in the *Review*, "News on the Rialto" (Winter, 1958-59), this story is part of a longer work based on a recent trip abroad. She wants it understood, however, that the episode and character are fictional.

man's address was on an artery. We went around Saturday morning. It was a respectable *peleteria.* But it was dark; the door was locked. We stood in the hot sun looking at the stiff models in their incongruous furs and the little handwritten notice pasted inside the window; *cerrado,* it said, in proper European script, *Fiesta de san Gemio.* I could feel my husband's almost imperceptible shift of balance as he made up his mind to go away. It's the finer, more costly legal pesetas for us, I thought; and somehow I felt relieved. But just then we noticed a man gesturing to us from the dim interior of the store. So we stayed until a workman in blue cottons and alpargatas came around the corner and led us in through the back.

He was waiting in the little office. "Senor Unterman?" said my husband. He nodded gravely. We shook hands and sat down. I began to feel better; he was so calm and courteous, so distinguished looking, slender and gray-eyed, his hair in smooth silver waves above his ears. So *Spanish,* really, with his arm garters, his striped shirt and high white collar; and there was the calendar that said *domingo, lunes, martes, miercoles,* the unhurried office with its four armchairs and family photographs. . . .

"*A sus ordones,*" murmured Saul Unterman, and he and my husband made their exchanges. First dollars and pesetas, then polite remarks: do you like Spain? Madrid, is she not beautiful? . . . when there was a sudden flurry of voices and another man came in.

Not came, burst into the office as the bull bursts into the ring. A heavy-set man with a broad jaw and crisp gray hair, close-cropped. "*Buenos dias!*" he said. "I am Saul Unterman."

It was too melodramatic; which was the real Saul Unterman? But our Unterman was already on his feet and he had somehow begun to fade, the way an old photograph fades. The new Unterman sat down heavily at the desk, without even looking at him. "He's my brother," he said. It was like an indictment.

Our Unterman said nothing in his own defense. He went on fading; then he was gone.

They might have been the work of two different artists. The brother by Whistler; but Saul Unterman's handsome head, with its broad cheekbones and sharp straight nose, the firm deep creases

around the eyes, would have been by some vigorous, confident Renaissance draftsman. Michelangelo, probably.

They were certainly dressed by different designers; Saul Unterman wore wrinkled tan trousers and a limp, short-sleeved shirt. And his dialogue was by another writer. When he heard our name his heavy eyebrows shot up, his mouth cracked open in a smile. "Jewish peoples!" he cried; and we were friends. No, not friends; countrymen. He reached over and touched my husband's shoulder. "I am glad you come to me! I tell you everything of Madrid. Twenty-nine years I am in business here; the mink coat was introduced into Spain by Saul Unterman. I tell you all you must know. Where you must buy, what you shall get." The brows fell in a scowl. "If you wouldn't watch, they take from you everything. Thiefs."

It shook us; we didn't *know* anybody who talked like that. Oh, no, we said; we told him how lovely everyone had been, how we *liked* the Spanish people. While we talked he sat watching us with his shrewd eyes, his mouth closed very firm and tight like some powerful piece of machinery, listening, thinking. But somehow you always felt he had heard it all before.

When he was ready he simply took back the reins of the conversation. "How long was you in Madrid? Did you went in Toledo? Go in Toledo, dear people; is wonderful. You liked the bullfight? When I'm first come in Spain, I go always. Is fine, a good fight, a good bull. But now, I don't go for many years. . . . Tell me, my name, how did you got it? Who said you to come here?" We told him. He listened; you could see this fact drop into the enormous card index of his mind, filed under the American businessman's name with the date and amount of dollars bought.

But we had nearly missed him, we said, on account of San Gemio. He smiled wryly. "San Gemio, saint of the fur workers. In Spain has everybody a saint, every work. His fiesta, you got to close. San This, San That. Every day, half-past one, you got to close till four; they go home for lunch, the men." He scowled, his lips pressed tight together as though the calendar of the Church, the climate, the habits of the Madrilenos, were parts of an enormous conspiracy to keep Saul Unterman from doing business. A hopeless conspiracy, I thought; a man like him does business the way some-

one else breathes. Otherwise, why should a successful furrier bother with our few dollars?

Then he waved all that away. "You stay in a good hotel?" The Palace, we said, embarrassed; the Palace is very grand. "How much they charge you?" It was so little for such opulence, we were embarrassed again. But not Saul Unterman; he might have been a governess asking if we had brushed our teeth.

Usually people open up as you get to know them, like little Japanese water flowers; you are struck always by the unforeseen, the contradictory. What struck you about Saul Unterman was his very consistency, his predictability. He leaned over and fingered my husband's sleeve. "Where did you bought this suit? London?" No, said my husband, New York. "What it costed you?" We could not remember. He stroked his own leg. "This suit I boughted in nineteen fifty-two. The finest gabardine, five hundred seventy-five pesetas. Fifty-two dollars." It was like the machines in the legal exchanges; you could almost hear the wheels whir, the figures click into place. "In Paris, nineteen twenty-seven, I had it made a suit, the best worsted, twelve thousand francs. Would be today five hundred thirty pesetas. Forty-eight dollars."

Several times he turned to answer the phone, once in German. Otherwise he sat quite still; it must have been the mobility of his face, his abrupt changes of mood, that gave such an impression of energy. He sat *heavily*, like an important person; it made everything he said seem important. "Did you was in France? You could speak French? *Vous pouvez parler en français?*" His French was as bad as his English, his Spanish, his German. He was at home only in Yiddish. No, I thought, that's wrong; he's at home in them all; he just doesn't speak them well. I thought, he uses language the way I use money; he doesn't really care. But he uses money the way I use words; money is his medium.

Then they came and whispered to him in Spanish. He listened, scowling, and turned back, brows raised in a smile, hands outspread. "Do you could have lunch with me, later? My housekeeper will have all ready, everything the best."

We refused. Countrymen, yes, sure; but you could carry it too far; and anyhow that wasn't what we were in Europe for. We thanked him and shook hands. "Maybe you will come back this

afternoon? I would tell you about Spain." His eyes searched mine, my husband's. "The real inside story. Franco, the war, everything."

Oh, in that case . . . ! Yes, indeed, we said.

"Until five o'clock, then." He leaned toward us. "Now I got to go talk to a *goy*."

We went back at five, a little surprised at our eagerness. Of course, it was for the inside story of Spain, we told each other; what a *terrible man*, like a *caricature*; but we found ourselves smiling, as you smile when you speak of a dear, naughty child. Perhaps he won't even be there, we said, in some strange kind of self-defense; maybe he was just being polite, maybe he'll forget . . . but he was at his desk, a cigar in his mouth, exactly as we had left him. He jumped up. "You came back!" He took my hand and my husband's, pressed them hard, and laughed. "You came back. You're good people!"

But there was someone else in the office, a young doctor with a smooth sallow face and a neat little mustache. We never knew why he was there; Saul Unterman did not explain us to each other. "He goes right away," he muttered. "I'll get rid of the *goy*." And he began to tell anecdotes in English and Yiddish; but the doctor only sat back with his legs crossed, smoking a cigar. At the end of a story, when we laughed, Saul Unterman would give him a hurried summary in Spanish; then he would smile and nod with half-closed eyes.

The stories were all old; evidently nothing entertaining had happened to Saul Unterman for some time. He seemed alone. Madrid had fifty-eight Jewish families, but they were not nice, he said, scowling. He brushed them away like a swarm of midges. "Not nice people." His family was in Arizona, three sons and a wife. The family photographs were all of his sons; he showed them to us. The two oldest were studying law and accountancy; but the youngest couldn't seem to get into a good medical school. "A Jewish boy must fight to get ahead. When I was young, I could fight. Oh, yes. But they need to be pushed. What can I do, so far away? I think, some other business? But it would be the same. . . ." Not true, we said; many American medical schools had quotas, but still Jews could succeed in almost all fields. He listened politely and changed

the subject. The doctor sat puffing on his cigar and smiling at the ceiling. Saul Unterman seemed to have forgotten him. He talked about his wife. "I want she shall take a house. I write, buy, buy. But she stays in the apartment. And each year go the prices up, up, up. She's afraid, afraid she would be cheated." I would be too, if I were Mrs. Unterman, I thought; but he seemed surprised.

When the doctor finally left it was dinner time. We asked Saul Unterman where to go for some dancing, some flamenco music. He shook his head. "I didn't been for years in those places. But a young man I know, he takes you. He's glad to. He is in the secret police," he said reassuringly. "The Spanish F.B.I. He comes soon, I fix it that he takes you tonight. Or they only rob your money, and you wouldn't see what's good. This boy takes you in the finest places."

Really, this was too patriarchal. "Please don't bother!" said my husband. "We'll be all right."

Saul Unterman shook his head, frowning. "Don't play the millionaire. No, he takes you, is better."

We struggled briefly and gave up. The young man arrived and everything was settled; he and his wife would join us after dinner. Then he left. "But I tell you something," said Saul Unterman. "You don't let him drink. Only beer, no whiskey. If you wouldn't be careful, he spends all your money on drink." He grimaced. "A drunken *goy*."

"What money?" said my husband, laughing uncomfortably. "We have no money, what can we lose?" But Saul Unterman merely waved his hands, fan-like. "Beer only. Don't play the big American millionaire."

Irritated and apprehensive, we rose to go. Saul Unterman put his hand on my husband's arm. "But I didn't could tell you of Spain! What do you tomorrow morning?" The Prado, we told him. He sighed with impatience. "Why go in the *Prado*? It's too hot."

We must have looked shocked. "I used to went," he said quickly. "When I am first come in Spain, days and days I went in the Prado. All right. But after? You are writers; you will write what I tell. In America they should hear what it is here; terrible, terrible. You will have lunch with me."

What could we do? No, we said; he should have lunch with *us*. He accepted immediately. "I take you to a special restaurant," he said. "Will cost you three dollars, not a penny over." We said he shouldn't worry, what if it were more? He looked at us with sadness, with reproach. "I am careful of your money," he said. "Your money is my soul."

He was early; hoping for a shower we hurried home from the Prado to find him, handsomely dressed, pressed, starched, altogether the prominent merchant, sitting with patient dignity in a kind of self-imposed isolation among the white and gold splendors of the Palace. He greeted us warmly but not effusively; here, outside his office, his bearing was reserved and watchful. He led us to a table against the wall, a little beyond the lobby. Leaning across the table he began to speak in a low, hurried voice. We bent toward him, straining to hear. When anyone approached he fell silent and, still leaning forward, watched them pass. "In the hotels is everyone a spy. . . ."

He told us that the government let other furriers, gentiles, import, but he could not bring in furs without paying enormous bribes. Ten thousand dollars of skins he had in France, that he could not bring in. Spain had become unprofitable; that was why he had sent his family to America; but now the government would not let him take his money, he could not join them until he found some way to get it out, four hundred thousand dollars worth of pesetas. . . .

Could not? *Could* not? Don't be romantic, I thought. But I sat back a little. There were big and little grievances all mixed together, all muttered with the same rage. Nowadays only the wives of Franco officials could afford mink, but the Church made them buy from gentiles instead of Saul Unterman, the man who had introduced the mink coat into Spain. And once an important businessman had come to his home, to the most beautiful apartment in Madrid, and after eating Mrs. Unterman's elaborate dinner had gone around speaking of him as a dirty Jew. . . .

It was not the inside story of Spain; only the inside story of Saul Unterman's oppression by Spain, his own personal Inquisition. And suddenly I was terribly hot, and tired, and it was hard to hear. My husband's knee had begun to twitch restlessly under the table.

I sat back a little more. . . . All at once he stopped. He put his hands on the table and rose heavily. "Now we go for lunch."

Remorseful, we chatted brightly on the way; but when we reached Saul Unterman's special restaurant we fell into an incredulous silence. It was the Edelweiss, German cuisine a specialty. But it was a good restaurant, and Saul Unterman could not have been more attentive and hospitable. Unless, of course, he had picked up the check. He translated the menu for me, at least those items he felt I should choose from. Then he ordered. For himself he chose boiled beef. "They make it very good. I come here always for the boiled beef," he said, shamelessly.

There was a disturbance; an old woman dressed in black had been going from table to table and now a waiter was pushing her toward the door. "*Momento*," said Saul Unterman. The waiter stood aside and she came over; suddenly all the waiters had grown busy, self-consciously, like amateur actors. He put two coins in her hand, muttering. I thought he was acknowledging her thanks; but he was talking to himself. "They will see. They will see if a Jew can give."

He ate like a hungry, hungry man, quickly, passionately. Then he pushed away his empty plate, frowning. "I eat too much. The doctors say I get too much weight. My heart. . . ." For a moment his eyes moved restlessly around the crowded restaurant. "I like the paella," he said suddenly; he called the waiter and asked for a half order.

No half order, said the waiter; only a whole order. "No," said Saul Unterman, flatly. The waiter left.

"Take it, take it," said my husband.

"It's too much, a whole order. The doctor is afraid of my heart." Eat half and leave the rest, we said. Or, better still, *we* would eat the rest, we liked paella, *loved* paella. . . . But by now the waiter had returned with a serving dish. He uncovered it; Saul Unterman looked inside. "No chicken!" he cried.

No chicken with a half order, said the waiter coldly. I sat back and waited, but Saul Unterman simply began to eat. It was so sudden, so anticlimactic, that it was clear the climax had passed, the climax had been the arrival of the half order and the victory had been Saul Unterman's; one triumph in a long struggle, like an endless litigation: Unterman v. Edelweiss.

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We watched him finish the last grain of rice; he had surely forgotten how we loved paella, he never offered us a bite. Then he wiped his mouth and flung down his napkin. "You will come to my house for coffee? I will buy a pastry, a marvelous pastry, from the finest bakery."

I said yes, quickly. Just another half hour, I thought; I did want to see the most beautiful apartment in Madrid. He called for the check and immediately found a mistake. He knew every price on the menu. When the check had been corrected he let my husband pay it. It amounted to exactly three dollars. He smiled. "Did I told you?"

I thought, is that why he's taking us home for the last course? We went out into the brutal midday sun. Wooden shutters were rolled down over all the windows, like eyelids; the street slept. No one sensible is abroad, I thought, only three foolish Jews. It was an unusual thought for me; I had spent years learning to think of people as *people*.

In the bakery he chose a voluptuous cake, heaped with chocolate shavings like curls on the head of an expensively kept woman. "Half of that one." The young man lined a box with waxed paper, cut the cake and slid his knife under it. "The other half, other half," said Saul Unterman. You knew he would have said it in either case. I moved down the counter, my husband sauntered towards the door; but we could not keep from watching. The young man put the second half in the box. Saul Unterman pointed to the scrapings on the plate. "Why do you forget that? That part too."

We went out again. A single cab stood at the corner, its driver dozing over the wheel. Saul Unterman broke into a heavy run; his footsteps echoed in the silent Sunday street. "Wait, wait!" cried my husband. In that heat, a man with a weak heart. . . .

He ran leaning forward, the cake box under his arm, and called back over his shoulder. "Someone else'll grab it!"

The house was on a wide, tree-lined street. We went through the dark entrance hall and up in the tiny elevator. There were two doors; his seemed to be the rear apartment. Maybe the rear is cooler, I thought.

We came into the living room. Heavy arm chairs covered in cracked black leather sat in a circle around a table. There were no pictures, no bric-a-brac, nothing. It reminded me of the doctors' waiting rooms of my childhood. He looked at us. "Beautiful?"

"Beautiful," we said. There was a stillness in the house, a thick stillness as though no one were there, no one were ever there. The brother has his own home somewhere else, I thought. I was glad for him. We went into the dining room. There stood a ponderous suite, grotesquely carved, turned, veneered; a huge table and chairs, enormous buffet, high glass-doored cabinet. Like an ugly family, I thought, the kind that makes you wonder how the parents had the courage to reproduce. Made to order by the greatest cabinet-maker of Berlin, he told us; he told us what it had cost. Then he paused. "Beautiful," we said.

We sat down at the table. He took out a heavy key chain, unlocked a drawer of the buffet and called me over. I looked in at the rows of forks. "These will be good for cake?" It was the only thing I ever heard him ask. Yes, I said, wonderful. He unlocked another drawer and took out three spoons. All the silver was lightly tarnished. Then he locked both drawers and put the keys in his pocket. He set the cake on a plate and lifted out the waxed paper. "For Pepito. My housekeeper's son." He carried the chocolate-smudged paper into the kitchen. We looked at each other; do you believe it? said our eyes.

The housekeeper followed him back, bringing a chromium electric percolator. She was a woman in her early thirties, wearing a neat cotton housedress and felt slippers, her hair pulled tightly into a bun. She stood silently beside his chair. He gave her the keys; she unlocked the cabinet and took out three cups and saucers, square, of fine china. She locked the door and handed him the keys; he put them back in his pocket.

The chromium percolator took a long time; even so, the coffee was weak. We had each a cup of coffee, a piece of cake, and a glass of brandy. The cake box stood forgotten, its string trailing across the crocheted spread. It was like visiting a bachelor, a shy young bachelor with his first guests. The spirit of Mrs. Unterman, far away in America, hovered disconsolately behind our chairs; you

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knew that Mrs. Unterman's coffee was hot and strong, Mrs. Unterman's table was as neat and beautiful as an altar.

The housekeeper had vanished; there was no sound from the kitchen, neither her voice nor the voice of her son. Saul Unterman devoured his cake, lit a cigar, sat back in his chair and told us the story of his life. My husband asked him, and he told us.

It made up for the inside story of Spain, for the special restaurant. He opened himself to us like a book, without shame, without even seeing any cause for shame. He told how he had fought with his father, a well-to-do farmer in Poland, and run away from home. "I don't never will forget," he said, proud, bemused. "Only a boy, no trade, no skill. Nothing but a few zlotys that I took from his money-box; about—" the wheels turned, the figures clicked, "—about eighty dollars. . . ."

It was a picaresque novel, full of the ingredients that make a best seller: romance, dramatic reverses, adventures in every capital of Europe. But the heroes of those best sellers are never named Unterman. He told it well, as people did before story-telling became an art for professionals. He acted all the parts: the Frenchwoman who took him in off the street, penniless, fed and lodged him and taught him how to handle furs; the wicked boss who tried to make him work on Saturday, the Sabbath. When he got to the time he went to Berlin to buy skins and his partners betrayed him, leaving him stranded without money, he showed how he had pretended to be a wealthy merchant at the German border, puffing impatiently at his cigar, barking arrogant orders. I saw a young Saul Unterman, with the same energy and combativeness, the same broad shoulders and heavy jaw, but slender, curious, before his life had narrowed to a tiny office behind a store, before his hungers were satisfied with cigars, with boiled beef and paella; and I had to believe it, every word: the scheming partners, the Jew-haters, the helpful women. I thought, I would have helped him too. I knew I would.

But now. . . . Strange, I thought, all his life he has fought like a bull, naturally, wholeheartedly, unceasingly. I admire the bull; everyone admires a brave bull; why don't I admire Saul Unterman? Why shouldn't he fight? He was reared for struggle, as bulls are reared, who never see a man on foot. I thought, is it

because he fights with money? I don't blame the bull for goring with his horns, trampling with his hooves; those are the weapons nature has given him. Money is the weapon the world has put into Saul Unterman's hand.

How could I blame him?

But I could no longer deny his existence.

We had to leave. I was half asleep. It was hot and we had eaten too much, drunk too much brandy, walked too far in the Prado. And it was all out of focus, like some exhausting *trompe l'oeil*; the past was brighter, more vivid than the present, than the dim still room with its deserted table, the tarnished forks laid out like so many little corpses in the felt-lined drawers, the fragile cups, like aging virgins, under lock and key. If there had only been some clear, simple emotion; but the story had no climax, neither victory nor defeat. What had he won, this old man, sitting alone in an empty house, six thousand miles from his flesh and blood, from his sons who, in the New World, still shiver under the old shadow? His own weapon is turned against him, I thought; it's the money that holds him here. Still, who knows how many dollars he has already bought? Or how long it will take him to buy the rest?

I was afraid he would try to keep us; because clearly we could never meet again, it had all been said. But he only nodded; perhaps he was tired too. "It was good," he said. "To talk to Jewish peoples." And suddenly I could understand the jokes, the folk stories, the Jew living in Omsk or Podolsk who opens his house to every Jewish stranger. Because otherwise how could the visitor eat? Because otherwise who was there for the host to talk to?

There is a special feeling that comes when first you see your father as a man, an ordinary man, with sadnesses and longings like your own. I had that kind of feeling.

He touched the knife. "More cake?" But he did not press us; instead he pushed the crumbs, the shreds of chocolate neatly toward the last slice. Pepito, I thought; the small boy. You see, you judged too soon; the paper was nothing; a joke, a promise. A little smile lifted the corners of his mouth; he said, "I'll give it to my brother."

All right, I said suddenly to myself. *All right.* To myself or to

some unseen author who kept writing the scene wrong. We walked with him to the door and thanked him. "Take care of yourselfs," he said sternly. It was an order. We turned to the elevator.

For the first time I saw a faint stain of humility on his massive face. "It goes only up," he said.

We started down the stairs. At the landing we looked back and waved. Perhaps the visitor, leaving the house in Omsk, also looked back. Saul Unterman raised his hand. But we had already gone too far; as we watched he turned and went into the most beautiful apartment in Madrid and closed the door.

Segovia

By CAROLYN STOLOFF

Dry in my fanless person, brushed
clean of Spain, the golden evening grows
sharp, vocal animations crush
me, cars clang along below.

I too at the window stand, but mild,
thirsty, without ears; not a stiff black
back do I know that passes or a child;
my own tongue chokes me without talk.

Gaily the girls gather, chaining
their arms, off to the paseo in a flock.
Dusk collides with the low sun, staining
the roofs with stilted shadows of the aqueduct.

Oh slow me! mute and mental when the street
is active. Here to spend the summer spell
abroad, coming, voiceless, for all the neat
reasons; but the air is sweet here and gentle.

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American Intellectuals and American Democracy

By WILLIAM G. CARLETON

■ The work and values of American intellectuals of the 1920's and 1930's have been under critical fire since World War II. But what of the intellectuals of the 1940's and 1950's? Perhaps by now it is not unduly presumptuous to begin attempting to put the American intellectuals of mid-century in some kind of historical perspective.

First, a word about the intellectuals of the 1920's and 1930's. The present generation tends too much to regard American thinkers and creative artists of those years as "radical." True, many of them were excited by the constructive possibilities of the Russian Revolution and enormously interested in the Soviet Union as a laboratory for vast social experimentation. However, as Granville Hicks and others have repeatedly pointed out, very few of America's intellectuals of the 1930's were Communists. Even among those who went pretty far to the left, there were many who survived their earlier enthusiasm to make valuable contributions to democratic thinking in the 1940's and 1950's. Some of these—Edmund Wilson, Malcolm Cowley, Robert Gorham Davis, Hicks himself, and others—reveal an awareness of twentieth-century realities, born of their earlier probings and experiences, too often lacking in our younger contributors. Others, with the God-that-failed mentality, having become disillusioned with the authoritarian "truth" of the left, have been searching ever since for some brand of authoritarian "truth"

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on the right. These embittered futilitarians, often extroverts in their personalities, have been among the leading assailants of their own generation.

It is my own feeling that the intellectual temper prior to World War II was more in harmony with the dominant American tradition than is the intellectual temper today; and more, that in general the intellectuals of the earlier period were coming to grips more realistically with the central problems, domestic and international, of our time.

Much has been written about how we were "betrayed" by the intellectuals of the 1930's. But as we move deeper into the twentieth century, we may find that it was the intellectuals of the 1940's and the 1950's, and not those of the 1930's, who departed more widely from the American tradition—at the very time, too, when that tradition needed to be reinterpreted, and applied to the realities of today.

I

What is the dominant American tradition? It is optimistic, democratic, rational, experimental, and pragmatic. It maintains that men are not the slaves of social conditions and blind historical forces, that to a large extent men can rationally mold their own institutions, without an hereditary or a privileged elite to guide them, and within the value-framework of human dignity and individual freedom. Although this tradition is often rationalized in terms of Locke, the Enlightenment, and Rousseauean humanitarianism, it came out of the historical interplay of creative man and indigenous American conditions: vast land and resources and a relatively small population; the relative absence of feudal, manorial, communal village, guild, and internal mercantilistic practices and traditions; the lack of aristocracy, priesthood, status, and "orders" generally; frontier realities; and the obviously howling success of the American experience.

America's Declaration of Independence boldly proclaimed the equality of men, regardless of birth, status, race, or religion. It was a revolutionary document when proclaimed, and it is a revolutionary document today. The Constitution of 1787, "struck off by the mind of man," created a government structure so contrived as to guarantee

liberty; it set an example of how man might literally "make" his own institutions. Even the Transcendentalists, in revolt against rationalism, were optimistic and practical idealists. Like the older American rationalists and the later American pragmatists, they were ready to make a future to order. "Why should we not also enjoy an original relation to the universe?" asked Emerson. As H. S. Commager has pointed out, the Transcendentalists, with all their faith in *a priori* truths, took a chance that the heart knew better than the head and labored heroically to make the good come true. Even the most lasting impression of Darwinism on the American mind was not the rationalizations of the Social Darwinians glorifying the plutocrats as the "survival of the fittest," but the assurance that there is constant change; and change, to most Americans, was something that could be directed to the good, be made "progressive." And at the turn of the century came William James's pragmatism, that marriage of American optimism and practicality with the bright promise of science. Pragmatism harmonized with American tradition and practice, for it emphasized the importance of experimentation, breaking with the past, rejecting custom and habit, trying new methods, creating a future on order.

American intellectuals of the 1920's and 1930's were in the dominant American tradition. John Dewey emphasized the plasticity of man's instincts, the malleability of human nature. Truth was not only what worked out for the individual but for society. Individuals sought, in common with their fellow men, for secular, immediate, and particular truth that had meaning for the community. Thorstein Veblen, fusing economics, sociology, and anthropology, and posing as an objective, if ironic, observer, sought through an analysis of the conflicts between business and industry, between technology and the price system, to realize the possibilities of the new technology. Charles A. Beard and Herbert Croly saw in the marriage of Hamiltonian centralization and Jeffersonian democracy solutions of contemporary industrial problems through democratic national planning. Vernon L. Parrington wrote passionately of the history of American thought as the history of an evolving revolutionary liberalism; the central theme was that of the battle between conservatism and liberalism, reaction and revolt, with liberalism and revolt triumphant; the American tradition emerged as the

identification of Americanism with democracy. Roscoe Pound, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., Louis Brandeis, and Benjamin Cardozo were in revolt against legal abstractionism and scholasticism, and were busy infusing the law with pragmatic values and social realism. Sinclair Lewis was writing of the ugliness of commercial civilization; Dos Passos and Steinbeck and Farrell were portraying social injustices; but in all of these writers, even in the determinism of Dreiser and Darrow, there was the unspoken assumption that man could overcome ugliness and evil by changing his environment. Even Wolfe, at the close of his life, was groping toward a recognition of something larger than himself.

In contrast, the most vocal and conspicuous of the present generation of American intellectuals have surrendered to non-involvement or non-commitment, or retired into formalism, or become obsessed with techniques, or retreated into the individual psyche, or fled into the non-rational and the irrational, or seriously distorted the American democratic tradition, or sought to substitute for evolving and fluid democratic values the fixed values of status and aristocracy. Exponents and exemplars of each of these points of view have all played down the wondrously rich diversity and flexibility of American life.

Now, of course, the older trends have not disappeared; the dominant points of view of the 1920's and 1930's still have creative exponents today; and vistas opened by earlier thinkers continue to be explored. In some areas, notably law and jurisprudence, pragmatism and social realism continue to make notable gains. Also, it must not be supposed that the new conservative points of view are entirely new; all of them had antecedents in the 1920's and 1930's and even earlier. Nor can it be denied that some of the work of America's uncommitted and conservative thinkers and creators of today is deepening insights, sharpening tools and techniques, penetrating psychic mysteries and complexities, intensifying aesthetic perceptions, and in some aspects of thought and life making Americans a more discriminating and sophisticated people.

What is novel in the current situation is the popularity of non-involvement and non-commitment and of conservative and aristocratic values. Conservatism is being proclaimed as the truly traditional attitude of Americans. Conservatism, it is said, has been

our dominant tradition all the time; what is new, it is claimed, is our belated recognition of conservatism as our national tradition.

Let us examine some of the values of the New Conservatism and kindred schools of thought popular today, inquire into the authenticity of their claim to be our national values, examine whether they square with today's social realities and the facts of contemporary society, and suggest some of the consequences likely to follow were we to accept them as our "traditional" and guiding values.

II

Many intellectuals of the post-war generation have fled from all values whatsoever. They have taken refuge in non-commitment and non-involvement and called it objectivity or sophistication or wisdom. The great vogue among textbook writers and publishers for anthologies and collaborative works which acquaint the student with "all points of view" is today a much-used way of escaping integration and commitment. Sampling opinion, taking polls, and compiling the results of interviews constitute another way of escaping commitment by merely tabulating statistically the relative opinions and values of others on comparatively surface or safe questions. More and more, authors of books and magazine articles merely report opinion, but do not express an opinion of their own. They indicate trends, but seldom pass judgment on them. And as for moral judgments—these are to be avoided as "hortatory" and "evangelistic." There is not even a commitment to eclecticism, to an avowed defense of a society in which the existence of plural and diverse values is taken as a positive good, the hallmark of a healthy, vital, free, and infinitely fertile civilization. This would be a defensible position, for it may be that the American society has in fact become such an eclectic society. But few contemporary intellectuals are committed to eclecticism as a positive value in itself.

Closely akin to the trend to non-commitment is the emphasis on form, technique, and methodology. One way of escaping commitment in subject matter is to concentrate on form. In all the intellectual disciplines today, even in the humanities and the social sciences, there is a growing concentration on forging methods and techniques that will make the discipline truly "scientific." Now, of

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course, nobody objects to sharpening the tools of investigation and research, but an excessive concern for methodology may also be a way of avoiding all substantive import. For instance, had Kinsey waited to "perfect" his methodology, or retreated into a minuscule area of investigation, or confined himself to a safe aspect of his subject, or been frightened by the moral and social implications of his researches, we would have been denied one of the few illuminating works of our time.

In literature, too, there has been an almost obsessive preoccupation with form, with style. If the 1920's and the 1930's represented a revolt from formalism, the present generation is characterized by a return to formalism. T. S. Eliot and the New Critics began the trend to form; today, form has become the vogue and most of our influential writers have been molded by the canons of the New Criticism. Norman Podhoretz has commented on the high stylistic polish, the precociously sophisticated craftsmanship, of our rising young novelists, even when these have little to say.

In matters of substance, many of this generation have retreated from social considerations into the individual psyche. There is an enormous preoccupation with individual man's motivations, love life, sex drive, frustrations, complexes, and neuroses; and there is a neglect, even an ignoring, not only of social considerations and problems but even of the impact of society and environment on individual man himself. Podhoretz has also commented on the concentration of today's young novelists on the individual's psychological drama. To our rising novelists, the supreme fact is personality and the main business of life is love. There is an almost total lack of awareness of the social environment as a molder of character and as a maker of the traumatic situations themselves.

In even many of our mature novelists and playwrights, life has been reduced to the individual's viscera, his gonads, and an eternal contemplation of his navel. There is, of course, a certain insight and fascination in the plight of the neurotic hero enmeshed in his own complexes and in the interplay of his little circle of family, friends, loves, and hates. But is this the ultimate wisdom in art? On this question, Arthur Miller eloquently writes:

> What moves us in art is becoming a narrower and narrower esthetic fragment of life. . . . The documentation of man's loneliness is not in

> itself and for itself ultimate wisdom. . . . Analytical psychology, when so intensely exploited as to reduce the world to the size of a man's abdomen and his fate equated with his neurosis, is a re-emergence of romanticism. It is inclined to deny all other forces until man is only a complex. It presupposes an autonomy in the human character that, in a word, is false. A neurosis is not a fate but an effect.

Is all of this an escape? Miller suggests strongly that it is, that we actually are more aware than previous generations of the impact of the city, the nation, the world, and now of the universe on our individual lives; yet we persist in refusing to face the consequences of this in art—and in life.

The degree to which non-social and even anti-social attitudes have come to prevail in literature and humanities faculties of our colleges and universities today is perhaps realized only by those of us who teach in them. Recently, by way of illustration, it was argued in the humanities staff of one of our state universities that Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, which for many years had been required reading in a course in twentieth-century literature, should be dropped from the readings because it was "only a social tract and not literature." The book was dropped.

Historians and biographers, whether they have the training for it or not, increasingly use the psychoanalytic approach in writing the lives of famous leaders. This method is also used by Harold Lasswell and his followers to analyze the careers of prominent politicians. When this is the approach, the tendency is to emphasize personal motivations, often running back into childhood, and not the social consequences of the leader's mature activities. Since conservatives are less "troubled" than liberals, radicals, and rebels, they usually come off as more adjusted and normal, whereas the non-conservatives, being more "troubled," are likely to come off as agitators, extroverts, and cranks, as victims of frustrations, complexes, and neuroses. This method, which minimizes the larger social setting of a leader's work and the social results of his work, tends to reduce all leadership, conservative and liberal alike, to the trivial and the commonplace, to rob it of its historical and social significance.

During the 1920's and 1930's, advances had been made in treating the leading philosophers and political and social thinkers in

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terms of the historical time and social milieu in which they did their thinking. Many intellectuals of this generation are in revolt from this. Exponents of the "great books" approach, the neo-Thomists, and, among others, David Easton in political theory argue that this method reduces thought to a mere sociology of knowledge. There is now a new emphasis on "pure thought," on theories separated from their historical and social context, on sheer logical analysis of the ideas themselves in an attempt to discover absolute truths. However, the emphasis does not seem to be on all the acknowledged ranking thinkers in the Western tradition. All too often greater emphasis seems to be placed on the thinkers in the Plato-Aquinas tradition, in the *a priori*-deductive-authoritarian tradition, and less emphasis placed on the equally important thinkers in the skeptic-nominalist-inductive-empirical-pragmatic tradition. Now, intellectuals engaged in this business are certainly not running from commitment. On the contrary, these are seeking, through a new exegesis and a new scholasticism, absolute commitment and eternal verity.

III

Many of today's intellectuals are putting a new emphasis on non-rational values. The rationalist values of the Enlightenment are more and more under attack. This is particularly true among the New Critics, the Southern Agrarian Romantics, and the increasingly influential Neo-Thomists. Arnold Toynbee, who has a greater vogue in the United States than anywhere else, speaks disparagingly of the Enlightenment as turning its back on the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and emphasizing the Mephistophelian maladies of disillusionment, apprehension, and cynicism. A political scientist, Eric Voegelin, is writing a gargantuan work, an attempt to build "order" in history and politics on Thomist thought. It seems that the apple of discord appeared with the Greek skeptics and Medieval Gnostics.

Now, of course, rationalism is not enough to explain history and life, but neither is non-rationalism. In order to be aware of the importance of the non-rational, one need not embrace non-rationalism completely; indeed, a rational respect for non-rational values may be the beginning of wisdom. Our society today, conscious of

both, has a better chance of reconciling rational and non-rational values—of balancing the Apollonian and the Dionysian (to use Ruth Benedict's terms), the prudential and the passionate (to use Bertrand Russell's terms)—than any society which ever existed. But this new balance and this new wisdom will not be attained by denunciation or rejection of rational values.

Closely connected with the revolt from rationalism is the revolt from democracy and the bold affirmation of the values of an aristocratic society. The intellectual revolt from democracy had its origins in the 1920's with H. L. Mencken, the New Humanism of Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More, Southern Agrarian Romanticism, and the New Criticism. Ortega y Gasset's *The Revolt of the Masses*, which appeared in 1930, has had a tremendous, though often unacknowledged, impact on non-democratic and anti-democratic thinking in America. Today, Southern Agrarianism lives on in John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and a number of younger votaries. The Neo-Thomism of Mortimer Adler has increasing influence. And the New Criticism of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Kenneth Burke has become the dominant influence in literary criticism. "America," according to Burke, "is the purest concentration point of the vices and the vulgarities of the world." The New Criticism has been summarized by Robert Gorham Davis as a way of thinking in which "authority, hierarchy, catholicism, aristocracy, tradition, absolutes, dogmas, and truths become related terms of honor while liberalism, naturalism, scientism, individualism, equalitarianism, progress, protestantism, pragmatism, and personality become related terms of rejection and contempt."

In his *The Conservative Mind*, Russell Kirk finds in conservatism a unified movement and a consistent body of first principles from the time of Edmund Burke right down to the present. He sees these first principles as belief that a divine intent rules society; affection for the mystery of traditional life; conviction that society requires orders, classes, status, social gradations, and hierarchy; persuasion that property and freedom are inseparably connected; faith in prescription; recognition that change and reform are not identical. This, of course, is a far better description of traditional European conservatism than of American tradition or even of American business "conservatism."

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Peter Viereck, in his *Conservatism Revisited*, finds in Metternich and in the Metternich system of 1815-1848 a sagacious attempt to conserve the traditional values of Western civilization and to bridle the forces of liberalism, nationalism, and democracy, which, according to Viereck, have led in the twentieth century to the mass man, fierce class and international wars, and totalitarian statism. A defense of the Metternich system is something novel in American historians, for up to this time every school of American history—Federalist, Whig, and Democratic—has seen in the Metternich system mostly obscurantist reaction. Many American specialists in international relations are searching in the Metternich system and the diplomacy of the reactionary Castlereagh for techniques and methods for coping with the revolutionary ferment of our time.

There is a disposition, too, to import from anthropology the "tenacity of the mores" as reason for resisting change. "Respect for the mores" played its part in the decision to retain the Mikado in Japan; it is being employed to sabotage new racial adjustments in the South. A century, it seems, is hardly long enough to allow Southern whites to adjust to the changes of the Civil War. Anthropology, of course, deals with the ways and techniques of change as well as with the resistances to change, but the emphasis of the conservative intellectuals who go to anthropology for rationales is on resistance to change.

America's New Conservatives describe the European past in too glowing terms; they romanticize it; they hearken back to a Golden Age which in fact never existed. They minimize the good of an industrial society. They do not give enough credit to the enormous gains made by industrialism over poverty, ignorance, disease, and personal brutality. They make conservatism both too comprehensive and too simple. They tend to appropriate for conservatism the whole humanistic tradition of the Western world, whereas, of course, that tradition has become a part, in somewhat varying ways, of Western reaction, conservatism, liberalism, radicalism, and socialism. Again, a consciousness of tradition, habit, and the organic continuities of social life are in themselves not so much a matter of conservatism as of the maturity and profundity of one's social understanding. The New Conservatives see in historic conservatism a consistency, a unity, and a continuity it never had in fact. If the need today is to

weld aristocrats, businessmen, Catholics, and Protestants into a common front against Marxism, such was not the case in the past; indeed, such a combination represents a putting together of historic enemies. The contemporaries of Metternich did not consider him an impartial mediator between aristocrats and bourgeoisie; they knew him to be the friend of aristocracy and the enemy of the bourgeoisie. Very often these New Conservatives think of conservatism as being above the battle, as being the wise judge composing conflicting interests, snugly fitting moderate change into social and historical continuity. They too often forget that conservatives, like everybody else, are motivated by their interests. Conservatives are likely to overestimate the virtues and underestimate the injustices of an existing order and of their own position. As William Lee Miller has pointed out, "relative justice" will usually not be found with the conservatives, however cultured or humane or "new," but with their opponents.

The New Conservatism is an attempt to substitute European conservative values for the American liberal tradition. It is as transparent a fraud as the Southern antebellum feudal dream of Fitzhugh, Harper, Ruffin, Holmes, Hughes, Dew, DeBow, Tucker, Bledsoe, and Hammond. (How many Americans, how many Southerners, remember these names today?) Kirk and his cohorts are attempting to foist Burke's traditionalism on America, and as Louis Hartz has acutely pointed out, Americans, including Southerners, cannot become Burkian traditionalists without becoming Lockians, because the predominant tradition Americans have had is that of Locke.

IV

Some other thinkers are guilty not of falsifying the American tradition but of distorting it. Frederick Hayek, who has had an influence on contemporary American thought, erects free enterprise into a rigid system and decries all departures from it as "the road to serfdom." Walter Lippmann, in his *The Public Philosophy*, takes natural law concepts, which are capable of both a liberal and a conservative interpretation, and gives them a conservative Thomist slant. (Lippmann himself is an illustration of many of the older generation who have travelled spiritually from left to right. Lipp-

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mann has moved from democratic socialism to liberalism to conservatism—and to the urbane observer above the battle.) Louis Hartz, Clinton Rossiter, and Daniel J. Boorstin emphasize the private property drives of Americans to the point of distortion.

Americans have believed that they began in revolution and that by a continuous process of experience and free experiment have been in a continuous revolution, a "permanent revolution," ever since. Hartz gives American history a different twist. He contends that Americans have never had a revolution, that they were born free. Unlike the European, they escaped the feudal-manorial-guild society, the society of aristocracy, status, and fixed orders, and were literally born into the new society of the free market. The result was a property-owning, middle-class society which took Locke for its patron saint; and if Locke had never existed, this society would have had to invent him. Now, of course, there is much truth in this, but it overstates the ease with which the American society came to birth and maturity and it understates the difficulties of building and maintaining a free and democratic society in the face of constantly recurring tendencies in the human situation to privilege, complacency, stratification, and ossification. In spite of the relative absence of an inhibiting cake of custom from the past and in spite of the favorable conditions of the American environment, a free society did not just occur automatically. Even in America, inhibiting left-overs of the European past were considerable. To realize the possibilities of the new environment, to mold America's free society and adapt it to constantly changing conditions, required vision, imagination, and humanitarian impulse; it required the experimental and pragmatic spirit; it required struggle and the willingness to do battle; it required innovators and fighters and innovating and fighting movements.

Kirk claims that the American Revolution was "a conservative restoration." Viereck calls it a "conservative revolution" in the pattern of the Revolution of 1688. (This would indeed be a surprise to Macaulay, who described the American experiment as "all sail and no ballast.") But Hartz says it was no revolution at all. (How "hot-house" all this would have seemed to the expropriated and exiled Tories!) The American Revolution, with its Declaration of Independence and its sweeping away of Old World legal, political,

economic, and social "vestiges," *was* a revolution, a revolution of considerable radical propensities.

Even though most of the subsequent political and social drives in American history represented "merely" a further breaking down of the status society, an extension of the free market, and a more widespread distribution of private property, they also showed a continuing humanitarian and innovating spirit. The great mass movements to abolish indentured servitude and imprisonment for debt, to enfranchise the propertyless, to emancipate women, to educate the masses at public expense, to abolish slavery, and to insure social justice in an industrial society are not to be set down as merely putting the finishing touches on a system pre-ordained by indigenous American conditions. The struggles between theocracy and Independency, Old World tyranny and New World freedom, seaboard and frontier, federalism and republicanism, agrarianism and capitalism, slavery and freedom, industry and labor were hardly picayune. Even the party battles of Hamilton and Jefferson, Clay and Jackson, McKinley and Bryan were not the hollow shams a whole host of young historians and political scientists are now "demonstrating" them to have been. While the drive in America to private property, to "American Whiggery," and to Horatio Algerism, so emphasized by Hartz, is undeniable, so also have been the drives to the freedom of the mind, equality of opportunity, and relative social justice—as exemplified in varied ways by Roger Williams, Daniel Shays, Franklin, Paine, Jefferson, Benjamin Rush, Jackson, Dorothea Dix, Horace Mann, Emerson, Greeley, Theodore Parker, Ellery Channing, Wendell Phillips, Lincoln, Whitman, Peter Cooper, Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Peter Altgeld, Susan Anthony, Jane Addams, George Norris, John Dewey, and scores of others.

Hartz raises some basic questions about the very nature of the political process. Are the conflicts of politics, even in Europe, rendered meaningful only when they involve class and the dialectics and ideology of class? Cannot problem-solving and the clashes of group interests, as distinct from those of class, also be meaningful? Granted that American politics have involved little class and ideological conflict, have not the clashes of America's amazingly diverse group interests over the distribution of the benefits of the American economy been most significant? Was the New Deal any less sig-

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nificant because its approach was non-ideological, that of "mere" problem-solving? Cannot Americans make decisive contributions to the underdeveloped peoples today by a problem-solving rather than a dialectical-ideological approach?

The Hartz thesis, that America has had no feudal and aristocratic right, no Marxist left, but only a liberal center, does much to clarify the difficulty Americans are having in understanding the "isms" abroad. But in playing down the humanitarian and the experimental elements in American life, Hartz and other conservatives are making it more difficult to bridge the spiritual gap between Americans and the non-Communist social-democratic revolutionary forces abroad. We cannot bridge this gap by harping on America's "monolithic liberalism," but we may bridge it by emphasizing the innovating, pragmatic, and basically non-doctrinaire nature of Americans and American society.

V

Those Americans writing about the American economy in a large and significant way—and beginning with World War II these have dwindled in number—are guilty of one kind of distortion or another.

A. A. Berle, who with Gardiner Means in the 1930's wrote a most meaningful book about America's big corporations, has now become an apologist for the economic concentrates. In his *The Twentieth Century Capitalist Revolution*, he likens the big corporations to the feudatories of old and to the modern sovereign state. Indeed, Berle sees the modern corporation taking over some of the functions of the state. According to him, we need not fear this corporate power because the big corporations will check one another, and they will go a long way toward checking themselves because of the sense of benevolence and social responsibility they are developing, the self-restraints of natural law, and the infusing spirit of a kind of twentieth-century City of God. Berle's distortion is that of optimism.

C. Wright Mills, in his *The Power Elite*, sees big business and the political state as merged, and the United States as a monolithic oligarchy ruled by the corporate rich, the high political directorate,

and the war lords. These orders of the American society have an interlocking membership and transfer among them takes place at the top. But what is the common goal of this elite? What common interest holds its parts together and gives it a common direction? Mills develops no concept of class which might hold this elite together, and he suggests no other bond of unity. What, then, prevents rifts and conflicts in the elite itself? The truth seems to be that the American society is more complex and diverse and has more vital conflicts and clashes on all levels than Mills will concede. America's elite is not as exclusive, concentrated, and unified as he makes out, and its decisions are not as free from the influence of Congress, political leaders, political parties, group associations and pressures, mass organizations, journalistic opinion, and public opinion generally as he contends. Mills's distortion is that of oversimplification and pessimism.

John K. Galbraith, until recently, strongly suggested that we may enjoy the economic benefits of oligopoly and at the same time escape the evils of concentrated power because of the operation of what he calls countervailing power, new restraints on economic power which have come into existence to take the place of the old competition. The new restraints appear not on the same side of the market but on the opposite side, not with competitors but with customers and suppliers. Galbraith admits that under the inflationary pressures of demand, countervailing power weakens and then dissolves. But even in the absence of inflationary pressures, countervailing power is not pervasive but sporadic, because while in our economy some customers and suppliers are large-scale and organized and able to exert countervailing power against original power, others are small-scale and unorganized and unable to exert countervailing power. Galbraith suggests that government step in and create countervailing power where bargainers are small-scale and unorganized. But government is not something isolated from society, above the battle, forever standing ready to act in a disinterested way to correct imbalances. Government itself is subject to pressures. Why doesn't government encourage the countervailing power of small business to oppose the original power of the concentrates? Because the concentrates have access to government, too; they can put pressures on government; indeed, their pressures are likely to be

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more effective than those of small business. Galbraith's distortion is that of seeing too much symmetry and balance, of substituting countervailing power for the old "unseen hand" as a built-in regulator, as an automatic balancer.

However, one can scarcely classify Galbraith as a conservative. In his more recent *The Affluent Society*, he has revealed some skepticism about his own concept of countervailing power, and he has emphasized the importance of the public sector, the area of government-produced goods and services, in our economy. Moreover, he promises to analyze the core of our economy in a forthcoming book on the corporation and the corporate personality.

Is it not strange that in the avalanche of publications that pours from the American presses there are so few studies of our business concentrates, those huge institutions that lie at the heart of our economy and our society? There is no end of studies in the classical market tradition, but there are relatively few which deal institutionally and pragmatically with our big-business economy. Every year our universities and foundations sponsor all sorts of studies on threadbare and peripheral subjects in all the intellectual disciplines, but how few studies there are that deal with the actual operation and administration of our giant corporations. Just how independent are these corporations? What is the nature and effectiveness of their controls over the economy? Why have not the trained personnel in these big corporations, more and more of whom are specialists from our graduate schools, taken advantage of their positions inside these corporations to give us realistic studies of their actual workings? (At least after they have retired or gone on to other employment.) Until more of these studies are made and then synthesized, much of what we say about the American economy—and the scope and nature of power in America today—will be inadequate, unrealistic, and speculative. Impressionistically, our economy seems to be amazingly mixed; but whether there is a preponderance of power and where it is, or what are the more important loci of power and whether and how they are balanced, are questions which cannot be answered yet.

VI

Perhaps the most pervasive distortion today is the belief that we live in a completely mass society and mass culture and that these are evil. Many intellectuals and aesthetes, and their numerous imitators, speak rather glibly of mass man, organization man, the crowd mind, group conformity, "togetherness," non-autonomous man, stereotyped man, the other-directed society, and the monolithic society. This conception may be selling our liberal society short. On the other hand, this may be symptomatic of a growing awareness of the importance of cultural freedom, in addition to political and economic freedom, a manifestation of a cultural revolution which is already far along the way. People were not so conscious of agrarianism's narrow limitations and its non-autonomy, but at least we are now increasingly conscious of the non-autonomy produced by industrialism.

The truth seems to be that while in some of its aspects our society is more integrated than the pre-industrial societies of the past, in some other aspects it is less integrated. In its economic and political areas it is more integrated, and there are threats to personal autonomy in these areas. However, we are increasingly conscious of them, and it is precisely in the political and economic areas that the American liberal tradition is strongest. This liberal tradition needs to be reinterpreted and then applied to the new realities. Certainly, rejecting the liberal tradition at this time would be a surrender to the forces of impersonality and not a challenge to them.

But in many of its other facets our society is less integrated. People in an industrial society have been freed from the old restraints of localism, from customary status and class, from the traditional primary groups of family, neighborhood, and parish. They are mobile. They can escape to the anonymity of the cities. There is a much wider range of choice in careers than there was in the past. And all people, no matter what they do, work less and less and have more and more time on their own. But do they escape the old fetters only to be absorbed in the crowd? There is escape into privacy and into sub-groups of one's own choosing as well as absorption into the crowd.

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W. H. Auden, in his *The Dyer's Hand*, observes that advanced technological society, by putting at our immediate disposal the arts of all ages and cultures, has completely changed the meaning of the word "tradition." It no longer means a way handed down from one generation to the next. It means a consciousness of the whole of the past of all societies—with their infinite ways and values—*as present*.

In our society, all sorts of values—pre-industrial and industrial, rural and urban, non-scientific and scientific, non-rational and rational—compete and jostle within communities, neighborhoods, families, and even individuals. (In some individuals, this produces neuroses; in many others, it produces personal emancipation and cultural enrichment.) In their personal lives, Americans display a wide variety of recreational, aesthetic, religious, moral, and sex values—perhaps the widest variety in the history of human societies. The amazing variety of attitudes and practices in sex found by Kinsey would likely be found also in other aspects of personal living, if these were given similar scrutiny.

The mass media, which are often said to impair autonomy and creativity, are in fact Janus-faced. They widen the outlets for banality and mass vulgarity, but they also widen the outlets for good reading, good drama, good art, good music, knowledgeable interpretation of events, and live history-in-the-making. Actually, in consumption, there seems to be at the present time more discriminating connoisseurship in food, drink, clothing, dress, housing, sex, entertainment, travel, reading, music, and the arts than there was in the days before mass advertising and the other mass media. And in production, creativity, far from drying up, has never been so alive. Never before has it been so easy for so many people to have careers in research, scholarship, science, and the pure arts. Since 1901, American scientists have in each successive decade been receiving a larger and larger portion of the Nobel prize. Since the 1920's, Americans have had five winners of the Nobel prize for literature. We may deplore the current avoidance of social realism by our contemporary American writers, but we can only applaud their increasing sophistication and craftsmanship. And the practical arts grow and multiply. There has been an enormous expansion and proliferation of the service industries, of applied social science and psychology (like social and

personnel work and psychiatry), of applied writing (like public relations, trade journalism, criticism), of applied art (like architecture, landscape gardening, commercial art, dress design).

A self-confessed middle-brow, Russell Lynes, comes closer than any intellectual to summing up the nature of our culture:

> Ours is a "You-name-it-we-have-it" kind of culture. It is a vast market place of conflicting tastes, conflicting ambitions, and conflicting needs. In guaranteeing "the pursuit of happiness," we recognize that not every man's happiness is measured by the same yardstick. We may do our damnedest to convince him that our yardstick is better than his, but we do not beat him over the head with it. . . . Out of the crowd that the *voyeurs* of culture call "the mass," many single voices are heard. So long as this is true, what we have is not a "mass culture," but neither is it an aristocratic culture. It is a highly competitive culture.

Is not ours a society without a metaphysical base? Is not ours an amazingly diverse, pluralistic, and eclectic society held together by a kind of humanistic pragmatism? And is not ours the probable prototype for other advanced industrial societies of the future?

To discover the actual nature of our society, the individual must for the most part look to the realities about him and trust to his own observations of life. Our researchers are currently bogged in methodology, minutiae, timidity, and bureaucracy; and our humanistic and literary intellectuals, with a passion for monistic unity, symmetry, conceptualism, and abstraction (most of all the New Humanists, the Neo-Thomists, the New Critics, and the New Conservatives), are busy constructing some homogeneous pattern for our society and culture, a pattern which simply does not exist. In a recent issue of *Commentary*, Robert Gorham Davis has pointed out how during this century American literary critics, with thorough Judeo-Puritan-Brahmin bookishness, have given the whole American literary tradition a homogeneity which in fact it does not possess.

VII

It would be a cruel paradox if we Americans failed in the world contest of today because we had succeeded too early and too well in developing the industrial society of the future. Our very wealth, as a society and as individuals, is producing a spiritual and psychological gulf between us and the world's poor folks which under the very

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best of circumstances is going to be difficult to bridge. Most of the world is in revolutionary ferment. The anti-imperialist revolutions in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa are the most important political event of our time, and these revolutions are seeking not a rationale for the status quo but a justification for basic change. They may find that justification in Marxism. They may find it in the dynamic, democratic, libertarian, experimental, and pragmatic tradition, the dominant tradition of the American society. But they will never find it in the non-rational, non-democratic, anti-democratic, aristocratic, authoritarian, and ritualistic attitudes of America's New Conservatism. Politically, the attitudes of the New Conservatives make sense only if the United States is about to undertake to erect a Neo-Metternich system to underwrite a conservative and reactionary status quo in the world or to build an outright American empire. But if the United States is to win the anti-imperialist revolutions from the Marxists and put itself squarely at the head of all those forces determined to build a future democratic world, then the New Conservatism is working untold damage to American foreign policy, even to American survival.

The New Conservatism distorts and even falsifies the American tradition. It does not square with the facts of our modern industrial society. It is playing into the hands of the Marxists. It is giving verity to the Marxist theory of history that a bourgeois society, when confronted with the Marxist challenge, must necessarily commit suicide by going reactionary. It is damaging America's appeal to the revolutionary, but democratic, forces abroad, and weakening the democratic attitudes in America necessary for a sustained and successful democratic appeal abroad.

On the other hand, America's optimistic, democratic, libertarian, rational, experimental, and pragmatic tradition is the dominant and authentic American tradition. Moreover, it is the only tradition ample and flexible enough to allow and give meaning to our culturally heterogeneous and eclectic society produced by advanced industrialism. And this authentic American tradition is the only one available to us Americans that will appeal to foreign peoples in revolutionary mood, justify their drives for basic change outside a Marxist framework, and give sense to the kind of societies their new industrialism will eventually evolve.

A Government Policy for Labor

By SANFORD COHEN

■ The last major statement of a national labor-management policy was made in 1947 when the Taft-Hartley Law was enacted. This law has survived intact for twelve years less because of its inherent strengths than because of a political stalemate that has inhibited amendment of a law that admittedly needs amending. Organized labor has pressed for a return to the spirit if not the letter of the predecessor Wagner Act. President Eisenhower and Secretary of Labor Mitchell has spoken in favor of a few "corrective" amendments. Business spokesmen have opposed all changes except those that would place additional restrictions upon unions. These conflicting pressures, which mirror the divisions in Congress, are not total explanations of why Congress has failed to act. The direction of an appropriate public policy toward labor unions has not been clear primarily because the consequences of a powerful unionism have not been clear. Recent developments in the areas of economics and ethics have resolved doubts about the consequences of strong unions for many persons, including a number in positions of political power. The Committee hearings and floor debates in the First Session of the Eighty Sixth Congress indicate strongly that there is a growing concurrence of attitudes which may be a sufficient condition for the end of the legislative stalemate and the enactment of new labor law.

An analysis of where we ought to go in the field of labor law requires at least a brief survey of where we have been. Until the

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1930's most of the pertinent law in the United States had the effect of repressing the growth of labor organizations. The techniques of repression changed over time—from the application of the Anglo-Saxon conspiracy doctrine to the use of the court injunction to somewhat tortured interpretations of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act—but the over-all effects were the same: a legal environment hostile to the pretensions of organized labor and an almost automatic power advantage for management during labor-management conflict. The law, in short, reflected an ideology of the inviolability of business property rights. Until something occurred that would modify the ideology, an about face in labor law was not likely to occur.

This something was the economic depression of the 1930's. It was one thing to defend going notions of free enterprise in an economy that worked. It was quite another when the system collapsed. With fifteen million persons out of work, few were likely to be impressed by the notion that nothing could or nothing should be done about the problem. Property rights, in other words, lost their sacrosanct character and the defenses against a more positive role for government in the promotion of public welfare were seriously weakened. All of this paved the way for the expression of the new labor law philosophy which was eventually embodied in the Wagner Act of 1935.

A basic premise of the Wagner Act was that collective bargaining should be encouraged to grow and that management should be denied the right to interfere with the growth process. Unionism did grow during the Wagner Act era—quite phenomenally, in fact. How much of the growth was due to the law and how much to a complex of other factors is debatable, but there is little question that the Wagner Act provided the most favorable legal setting unions had ever enjoyed in this nation.

Ironically, it was the success of the Wagner Act that led to its demise. Between 1935 and 1947 most of the workers in the basic industries were organized and many of the old line craft unions enjoyed a much needed rejuvenation. Unions that had not been in existence in 1935 emerged from the war with hundreds of thousands of members. Total union membership grew from 3,600,000 to 14,000,000. It was almost inevitable that a growth of this size would be attended by incidents that would alienate some of the public

sympathy for unionism. Jurisdictional disputes, coercive picketing, the wartime work stoppages, and the rash of post-war strikes were among the factors that cumulatively destroyed the favorable public relations position of organized labor. At the same time, the businessman regained a large measure of the popularity lost since 1929. Industry had "come through" during the war and the postwar prosperity, of course, did not tarnish this reputation. This realignment of attitudes made possible what all the resources of organized industry had been unable to accomplish in ten years of effort: the enactment of legislation (the Taft-Hartley Act) that redefined the legal positions of labor and management.

The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 is a complex and sprawling piece of legislation. An examination in depth will reveal all sorts of gimmicks about which unions are rightfully alarmed. Viewed as a whole, however, the act expresses the philosophy that the processes and results of collective bargaining should be subject to some degree of control in the public interest, as should a number of the pressure tactics of organized labor. Superimposed upon the substructure of the earlier Wagner Act, the Taft-Hartley law has the twin objectives of encouragement and control of collective bargaining. The relative emphasis to be placed upon encouragement as against control is rather vaguely described, although a somewhat conservative administrative agency has tended to emphasize the control aspects.

With the emergence of organized labor as a major power in the American economy, a fresh approach to the development of public policy is in order. Such an approach, however, requires a precise knowledge of what it is we want to accomplish. The Taft-Hartley Act muddied the waters in this respect, since it provided only vague answers to two basic questions: (1) how much and in what ways should collective bargaining be encouraged, and (2) how much and in what ways should the bargaining parties be controlled. These are delicate and complex questions that can't be answered by swinging a vindictive meat axe in the direction of organized labor. There are features of the labor-management relationship and features of internal union affairs that are legitimate causes of concern. Given the prevailing state of opinion, it is highly likely that labor organizations will be subjected to new restrictions. The danger is that the restrictions will be punitive rather than corrective, and the

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possibility that pure and simple anti-union measures will slip by in the guise of corrective action is widely recognized.

When corporate malpractices became apparent in the past, legislation such as the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and the Public Utilities Holding Company Act was designed to correct the abuses rather than to destroy corporations. This was obviously wise, since the corporate form of business organization is essential to the workings of our economy. Too often, however, we lose sight of the fact that the trade union may be equally essential. Public opinion is heavily conditioned by the immediate; and current opinion may be dangerously biased by a lack of perspective. It is high time, in short, to step back from the welter of present-day controversy and take a long run inventory of the successes and failures of unionism. What have they contributed and where have they fallen out of line? Frank answers to these questions may be helpful in forestalling the emergence of a misguided public policy.

The Successes of Unionism

Before the advent of modern unionism, work was an unpleasant experience for millions of Americans. As technological change produced larger and larger workplaces, the social as well as the economic distance between worker and boss widened. Crucial workplace decisions—discharge, size of work assignment, hours of work, physical conditions, and disciplinary action—were made by unilateral management action, and management was guided primarily by impersonal economic strictures that had little room for notions of equity or welfare. In many cases the petty tyrannies of the foreman contributed as much to worker discontent as did the aloofness of the employer. Techniques such as scientific management, paternalism, the company union, and a primitive form of the sociology of human relations tempered the harsher features of the work environment, but they had a common failing. The worker remained economically unenfranchised, and whether he was treated poorly or well depended upon the sufferance of the employer.

The contribution of the labor union in this area is that it has created a system of what has been called industrial democracy. Workers, through collective bargaining, *participate* in the establish-

ment of working conditions and, through the grievance procedure mechanism, police the application of the decisions they helped write. This seems like elementary justice but it was not a self-emerging justice. The right to participate developed only because the labor union became strong enough to insist upon the right. The emergence and widespread practice of democracy at the workplace must be regarded as a major contribution of the American labor movement. (Parenthetically, this does not mean that work has become an exhilarating experience. The technical nature of the job precludes this in the larger number of cases. But eight hours of boredom is preferable to ten or twelve hours of tyranny, a point that can be verified by conversation with the middle-aged or older person whose work experience began before the advent of modern unionism.)

As is often the case in economic or social change, reform was carried too far in some situations. Any student of industrial relations can cite instances where a labor union has used its power to limit employer discretion to an intolerable extent. Such situations can usually be traced to the immaturity of local union officials or to the poor caliber of such officials. Despite some negative results, however, industrial democracy has been a salutary development, and if many non-union employers have become more enlightened in recent years, at least part of the reason is the example provided by unionized firms.

Another positive contribution of the American labor movement has been its success in minimizing the influence of communism in the United States. In a nation that is highly sensitive to the threat of communism it is surprising that so little is made of this point. Long before the overdramatized efforts of Senator McCarthy, many national labor unions were the scenes of bitter power struggles between communist and non-communist factions. In the vast majority of cases the non-communists won out and at the present time communist influence in the American labor movement is weaker than it has ever been.

The significance of the latter point should be underscored. A communist party without a mass worker base is a head without a body, and if the Communist Party in the United States has no body, the leaders of our labor unions are as responsible as anyone else. Communist influence, it should be noted, was not easily eliminated

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from the unions and at various times a large part of the energy of men like David Dubinsky, Walter Reuther, and James Carey was absorbed by internal struggles against left wing elements. The efforts of these and many other labor leaders contained the spread of radical influence so that today the communist may threaten through espionage or sabotage but he cannot threaten by fomenting economic or political instability. Denied access to the power that is inherent in organized worker groups, the American Communist Party has in effect been rejected by the "proletariat" it ostensibly represents.

A third major contribution of unionism is the spread of the practice of collective bargaining. Inclusion of collective bargaining in a list of the social contributions of organized labor may seem strange since, typically, collective bargaining is regarded as the bête noire of the piece, a means by which unions pummel or are pummelled by management. Such a conception confuses cause and effect. A labor union, in the usual case, is the result rather than the cause of worker discontent. In a society with no angry people, the union could not exist; given adequate numbers of angry people, the union or some similar protest organization will inevitably appear. Public attention is ordinarily directed toward the pathology of bargaining—the strikes, the coercive practices, the violence. (Everyone knows about the Kohler strike, but who knows that the bakery employers in Cleveland and Teamsters Local 52 have had an amicable and strike-free relationship for twenty-five years?) This lopsided publicity has hidden the positive function of collective bargaining.

Professor Robert Dubin has described collective bargaining as a great "social invention." It is, in fact, a great and fortuitous invention in that it provides a technique for moderating the conflicts that are inevitably engendered at the workplace. Unfortunately, the place of work is a fertile breeding ground for grievances, discontents, tensions, and pressures of many varieties. Unless a channel is provided for an orderly expression of worker dissatisfaction, the expression will take some form—wildcat strikes, low productivity, high turnover are examples—that is costly to the firm, the worker, and oftentimes the public. The positive function of collective bargaining and the grievance procedure that most labor-management agreements establish for the administration of their contracts is to

serve as a technique for rooting out trouble spots and dealing with them on a rational basis. Bargaining is a device through which potential conflict, in the vast majority of cases, is prevented from becoming overt conflict. In many firms, the alternative to collective bargaining would be chaos.

It should be apparent by now that by successes of unionism we mean here those aspects of unionism that contribute in a positive way to the successful functioning of our economic and social system. Another reference to the business corporation may clarify this point. The corporation is organized for the purpose of earning a money profit. In the search for profits, however, it produces goods and services, provides employment, and contributes to the capital equipment growth that is essential if high living standards are to be maintained. The union similarly is organized for the purpose of advancing the interests of its members and the process of promoting worker interests has produced results that have been beneficial to society as a whole.

The Failures of Unionism

Two major faults are now popularly attributed to labor organizations in the United States. One, the matter of corruption, is outwardly apparent. The other, the capacity of labor to distort cost-price relationships is more conjectural.

Since 1900 the labor movement has been characterized by sometimes larger and sometimes smaller spots of corruption. It would be unfair to condemn the banking system as corrupt because the system produces an annual crop of embezzlers and it is equally unfair to write off the entire labor movement as a hotbed of corruption. Labor spokesmen have correctly pointed out that only a small percentage of those in positions of power have misused their authority. Recent disclosures, however, have shown that the amount of dishonesty is larger than was commonly supposed and even AFL-CIO president George Meany has expressed surprise at the extent of the corruption in unions.

The mounting evidence of malpractices has spurred the AFL-CIO to strong reaction. Codes of ethical practices have been adopted and offending unions have been expelled from the labor federation.

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Having done this much, however, it is not apparent that the AFL-CIO can do much more immediately. Unions can and have functioned successfully without federation affiliation, and in the absence of a rank and file enthusiasm for a change in leadership there is little that the AFL-CIO can do to crack the power of the organizations it has expelled. Because of the ineptitude of local law enforcement and the limited reach of AFL-CIO authority, it appears that federal legislation against certain corrupt practices is in order.

The second basic criticism now levelled at labor organizations is that union wage policy has caused inflation and contributed to the instability of the economy. This is a complex and controversial issue and even among professional economists there is no impressive consensus of opinion. Much oversimplified, the argument goes along the following lines: Unions have the power to impose their wage demands upon employers. Faced with higher costs, the employer will react and his reaction will be conditioned by the state of the product market. If the market is hard—that is, if buyers resist higher prices—some unemployment will occur, since it is not likely that the same volume of employment will be offered by employers at the lower profit level. In a hard market, then, the results of excessive wage demands are higher wages for some workers and unemployment for others. If the market is soft—that is, if there is plenty of money around and spending is free—the employer will react by passing the additional wage cost on to the consumer in the form of higher prices. The end results in a soft market are higher money wages, higher prices, and inflation with its attendant hardships.

According to the argument, excessive wage demands must lead to unemployment or inflation. Though unions have the power to impose their wage demands upon employers, they have no control over the processes by which employers attempt to protect their profit positions.

Another element enters into the picture, however. As a nation we have committed ourselves to the goal of maintaining high levels of employment. The commitment is stated in the Employment Act of 1946, but even if this law did not exist, the realities of politics preclude the possibility of an administration's ignoring any unusual amount of unemployment. This means that unemployment, no matter how caused, will call forth corrective governmental measures.

Where the cause is an increase in wage costs, the government must either ignore the unemployment—which is not likely—or else create an economic environment that will support the higher wage costs. Such an environment can be created by expanding the money supply sufficiently to enable business firms to charge whatever prices they feel are necessary to maintain the pre-wage increase level of employment. The government thus is in a position where it has to sanction any level of costs and prices that is established by the collective bargaining process. The restraining influence that unemployment might have exerted upon excessive wage demands disappears in the face of the full employment commitment.

As noted above, the argument is conjectural. Most of the price inflation that has occurred since World War II is best explained by the excessive liquidity created by war financing techniques, and a number of economists believe that wages are no higher than they would have been in the absence of union pressure. Even when these counter arguments are considered, however, the possibility remains that the union practice of demanding wage increases in excess of annual productivity gains will lead to chronic inflation. This charge, incidentally, has been made with increasing frequency by academic economists, a group that heretofore has supplied some of the most vociferous and sophisticated defenders of the American labor movement.

The Labor Policy Problem

The challenge that faces the Congressional policy makers can now be summarized. Organized labor has made substantial and necessary contributions to the social stability of our society. In several respects, however, union behavior has been disruptive. The legislative problem, then, is how to control the disruptive tendencies without affecting the ability of unions to make their positive contributions. The problem is one of a delicate legal balance and is sufficiently complex to challenge the ingenuity of the wisest of lawmakers. Unfortunately, the air of partisanship that has prevailed so far in Congressional hearings raises grave doubts as to whether the problem will be approached with a necessary objectivity.

The reader will recognize that the labor policy problem poses

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a dilemma, but luckily there is an out for those willing to use it. The out consists, simply enough, of a minimal legislative program directed exclusively against the more blatant forms of corruption that have come to light. Since this prescription runs counter to what is apparently a popular feeling for a more punitive approach against organized labor, let us examine separately the corruption and inflation issues from a policy standpoint.

Either of two approaches might be followed in an attack upon corruption within unions. One would consist of a program dealing with the specific manifestations of dishonesty—the welfare fund abuses, the commingling of personal and organizational fortunes, the out-and-out racketeering, and so forth. The other would consist of a direct attack upon the union institution itself, an attack based upon the assumption that labor union power is inherently associated with an abuse of that power.

A decision as to which of these approaches is more appropriate at the present time requires an examination of a basic issue that confronts the world of organized labor. Will the labor movement continue to be characterized by an idealism that historically has motivated the labor leader, or by a thirst for power to be used for essentially selfish ends? In the much publicized Teamsters Union, for example, idealism is declassé and from the top to the lowest levels of Teamster officialdom, the officers faithfully intone the current Teamster line: "We are running a business." The Teamsters and a number of other unions have taken on some of the coloration of the business world, whose ethics they originally set out to modify, and in emulating business they have frequently emulated the worst face of business—the lavish perquisites, the showy living, the exploitation of contacts and inside information. This aspect of the "union business," however, is less threatening than its long run potentialities. It is not hard to imagine that a powerful unionism bereft of ideals could lead to a cartelization of product markets, a ruthless control over union members and business firms, and a variety of disadvantages for the consuming public.

Should it become apparent that this is the direction of American unionism, it would be time to control that movement directly by devices such as limitations on the geographical scope of bargaining, application of anti-trust laws to labor organizations, and a rather

severe control of internal union affairs. But it is not presently apparent that this is the inevitable direction of unionism and the larger part of organized labor in this nation continues to be oriented toward those ideals which long have been essential features of the labor movement and which society has come to condone. A direct and penetrating attack upon the entire labor movement, in short, is not only premature, but would weaken those elements in the movement that are presently the major defense against a runaway, power hungry unionism.

The belief that union power should be subdued so as to weaken the ability of labor to make inflationary wage demands probably extrapolates too much from the special circumstances of the post-World-War-II period. If wage increases have been inflationary—as noted above, this is conjectural—they have been so in an economic context that encouraged such increases. The commercial banks, the Federal Reserve System, the United States Treasury Department, corporation price policies, and consumer buying habits contributed in important ways to the several inflationary spirals we have been through. It would have been rather unusual if labor leaders had remained aloof from the inflationary patterns of behavior that characterized everyone else.

It is well to keep in mind that collective bargaining has become an important institution in the United States in a relatively brief time. During the 1930's the energies of labor organizations were absorbed, for the most part, in a struggle for survival. In the 1940's everything else was overshadowed by the demands of the war economy. Thus, a fundamental change in the process of wage determination was occurring in an economy that was first abnormally underemployed and then abnormally overemployed. Given this background, it would have been surprising if labor-management negotiations had moved at once to high levels of maturity and economic sophistication. Important changes in economic processes do not occur without some turmoil and, all things considered, the transition from a state of unilateral to collective wage determination was accomplished without undue damage to the American economy.

The labor-management relationship has been characterized by higher and higher levels of maturity as the years have passed and there is no reason to believe that this maturation will not continue.

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It is not unrealistic to hope that in the future the bargaining parties will consider in a more intensive way the effects of their wage bargains on the economy as a whole. There are some signs that this is already happening and it would seem that the conclusion that union wage behavior will be inflationary under all circumstances is a hasty one.

On both issues, then, corruption and inflation, caution would appear to be preferable to bold policy formulation at the present time. Unions, of course, are no more immune from public regulation than other institutions, but such regulation should follow from signs of anti-social conduct that are more clearly marked than the existing ones. The basic objectives of labor law should be to help the labor movement live up to its potentialities for service to workers and the larger community and to purge itself of those characteristics that are harmful not only to the public but to the labor movement itself.

Hurricane Warning

By LARRY RUBIN

The squall opens like ripe parachutes
Whose silken threads are tangled skeins of rain
Sloping each bullet to the ground
Slanted miles from its direct target.
Shrouding the coast in shivering billows,
Gray arcs curving out of chaos
Blow in waves from shattered spirals—
A wet battalion withering the shore.

Flapping rags of parachute—then sun:
But darker squadrons override the east,
Treading the sky with boots as black as rain.

A short story by LARRY RUBIN appeared in *New Campus Writing No. 2* and he has published poetry in a wide variety of quarterlies and general magazines. He teaches English at Georgia Tech.

After

By ARNO KARLEN

■ Where Obal had been hanged the earth kept its stillness. The low hills which enclosed the valley and their dry brown-turning grass usually harbored, in the morning, at least a few locusts, a small reddish snake, a bird, a mole. But now the entire landscape was mistily sunny and immobile in the beginnings of the day. Not even a small wind came to swing Obal on the tree's arthritic arm. Aside from the ladder that leaned against the trunk, Obal himself was the only interruption to the scene, burdened with his deadness and his bundled clothing.

The two men standing beneath the tree regarded Obal's nodded head. Long strands of straight dark hair had fallen over Obal's eyes.

"Well, Frank," asked the taller, sighing, "what are we going to do with him?"

Frank, leaning the slight weight of his body on the shovel he held upright on the ground, was contemplating the knot in the rope. His light eyes squinted in the early rays of the sun. His mouth was querulously tightened over a small round chin.

A moment passed in silence, a silence in which both men felt themselves characters in a dusty tableau.

"I know, I know," Alex went on, "it's hard to finish these things. Harder than starting them. But we have to be done with it. The ground is too hard to dig. What are we going to do with him?"

He turned to Frank, who was still watching the body that

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dangled stiffly from the tree. Involuntarily, Alex looked where the other was looking.

"It isn't very pretty," said Frank.

"No, no, it isn't. I thought we were through last night when we left him here. But then I realised that we couldn't just let him hang like this."

"Why not?"

"Why not what?"

"Just leave him here."

Alex shook his head, small above large shoulders, emphatically.

"It would be all right," he said, "if it were just a private matter, between the two of us. But here, out in the open, with the sun and the birds, and then people passing by . . . it's our responsibility."

"Let's leave him. Someone who comes by will. . . ."

"Impossible. Do you think you can always get out of everything that doesn't look easy? It was long enough before we finally got to hanging him, and a bad enough job when the time came. And now you want to leave it half done. We did it, we have to finish it. So let's clean up this mess."

"Don't get mad. I was only suggesting it."

They stood in silence again, regarding Obal.

Alex rubbed the back of his neck, where the sun was prickling his skin.

"We could burn the body," he said.

"There isn't any wood, except the tree. And we don't have an axe."

Alex continued to rub his neck with his palm.

"Couldn't we just go home?" asked Frank.

With a gesture of impatience Alex walked to the tree. He looked at Obal; he looked at the ground, the tree. Then, testing his weight against the ladder and drawing his knife, he began to mount.

"Watch out," he said. "I'm going to cut him down."

At the top rung he stopped, leaned to his left, took the rope a foot above Obal's head, and began to saw with the knife. As he sawed, Obal swayed backward and forward. When at last the rope had been severed, Obal dropped suddenly, swiftly, and struck the grass face down.

"That wasn't so bad," said Alex, descending.

He rejoined Frank, knife in hand, and faced the fallen burden again.

"At least he's down," said Alex.

A watch-beetle was crawling over Obal's bound wrists, groping along the groove between two twists of the rope.

"We could. . . ."

Frank stopped and said no more.

"What were you saying?"

"Nothing."

"What is it?"

"Nothing, nothing at all. Forget about it."

Alex shifted his weight impatiently from one foot to the other.

"Frank, if you have an idea, tell me what it is. We can't spend the whole day here looking at him."

"Well, if we can't leave him here, and we can't burn him, we could . . . well . . . lacking anything else. . . ."

He lowered his eyes.

"What?"

"If they weren't, you know, too big. . . ."

"If what weren't too big?"

"I mean . . . the pieces. . . ."

"Shut up!"

"Well, we do have a knife!"

Alex turned to Frank, whose eyes were still cast down.

"Sometimes you make me sick."

"You see," said Frank, "we thought hanging him would take care of everything. And now we're fighting again."

"All right, all right, we won't fight. Just think of something."

"If we fight, then neither one of us will be able to think."

Alex blew his breath through his nostrils in annoyance. There was another silence.

"We could . . . ," Frank began.

But Frank's voice trickled into silence again.

"What is it this time?"

"It's no good."

"What is it?"

"You'll be angry again."

Alex's eyes were bright with frustration and anger.

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"I won't be angry! What is it?"

"If the ground is too dry to break with a shovel, why don't we try to loosen the topsoil with the knife? It might be softer once we get below the grass."

Alex kicked the earth with his toe.

"We could try."

He kneeled and began to jab at the earth, turning up small clods with the flat of the blade. After a short effort he rose, took the shovel from Frank, and tried to thrust it into the ground. The tight parched soil still resisted. He pushed several times, but the shovel did not bite deep.

"It's no good," he said.

"I told you so."

Frank and Alex looked at each other blankly, exasperation creasing Alex's forehead.

"Cut the ropes."

They turned.

"Cut the ropes. I'm sick of listening to you. If you're so clumsy I'll do the job myself."

It was Obal, who had turned his head toward them to speak, lying on his belly beneath the tree.

Neither Frank nor Alex moved.

"Stop standing there as if you were helpless. Cut the ropes and I'll dig it myself."

Frank looked to Alex for approval, but Alex was looking at Obal with an expression of strained and distant concentration. Obal was tugging experimentally at his bonds. Frank took a step, hesitated, then at last took the knife from Alex's hand timidly, cut the ropes that bound Obal's wrists, being careful not to touch his flesh.

Obal sat up, shook off the ropes, then stood. Brushing past Frank, he took the shovel from Alex and set it to the sod under the tree. Bracing it with his foot, he pushed it through the surface of the soil and past the roots of the tough grass. The two men stood ready to interrupt, but Obal worked with steady impatient vigor.

Alex gestured to Frank, who hurried to stand by his side as Obal dug wordlessly.

"We've got to stop him," whispered Alex. "We've got to stop him right now."

"I don't think it would be worth fighting about," Frank whispered softly in reply. "He seems to mean to do it himself."

"Go and sit down," said Obal. He grinned. "You're incompetent, both of you."

Frank and Alex watched him dig, but they soon felt ashamed of their indecision and sat down with their backs against the trunk of the tree. There, forearms resting on their knees, they watched in restless silence. When Obal had been working for several minutes Alex said:

"We ought to be doing it. This isn't right."

Frank nodded but did not move. He made a fanning gesture with his hand, as though to indicate the waxing heat of the day. Obal still plied the shovel, long straight hair falling over his forehead and eyes as he bent and tossing back as he straightened to cast the earth behind him.

Alex cleared his throat.

"I want to tell you," he said loudly, "that it's only because. . . ."

Obal waved him to silence without even turning his head. Alex lit a cigarette disconsolately. Nothing more was said until Obal finished digging.

When at last he had finished he gestured to the two men. They stood up hastily and went to stand near him at the edge of the fresh deep grave.

"All right," said Obal, "it's finished." Alex tried to interrupt him, but at the same time Frank touched his arm gently in admonition and Obal thrust the shovel into his hands as he climbed into the grave.

"Look here . . . ," said Alex.

But Obal was already stretching out at the bottom of the grave.

"All right," said Obal, "shovel it in."

"You can't give me orders like. . . ."

Obal smiled again, disdainfully.

"Shovel!"

Frank leaned over to whisper in Alex's ear.

"Be reasonable. He helped us this far, don't cross him now."

Resentfully, Alex dropped a shovelful of dirt on Obal's chest.

"Don't botch it," said Obal. "Get it all. Do something properly for once in your life."

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"Don't worry," reassured Frank in a tone of enthusiastic sincerity, "he'll do a good job."

"Shut up!" said Alex, shovelling.

Once Obal's face was no longer visible, the work went faster. In a few minutes Alex had filled the grave. He wiped the sweat from his temples and stamped on the loose earth with his feet. Last, with a manner of finality, he thrust the shovel into the ground at the head of the grave, like a marker. He wiped his hands on his pants.

"It's finished," he said.

"Yes, it's finished. And a good thing, too."

They remained there, by the grave, as though expecting something further to happen. But nothing happened. They looked at one another.

"Let's go," said Frank.

"The ladder."

Each of them took up one end of the ladder on his right shoulder. Turning their backs on the tree and the grave, they started up the hillside.

Not until they reached the top of the hill did they stop. There they set the ladder down and looked back at the valley. It was still quiet and untenanted. Only the lone tree and the shovel that stood upright in the ground, slanting slightly to the left as though the earth had already begun to settle. A slender premonition of sterility seemed to inform the trampled earth beneath the tree. The morning mist was vanishing; a very light breeze began to make the sere tops of the grasses undulate like paper.

"You know, he did it again," said Frank. "We didn't even know it while it was happening, but he did it again."

Alex did not answer, looking at the grave in the pocketed valley.

"I guess he never loses," said Frank.

"Shut up."

They looked another moment at the still scene, then bent and lifted the ladder to their shoulders once more.

"So we still aren't done with him," said Alex.

"We could dig him up again."

"No, it's too late. We can't take it back."

"I suppose not."

Silence. Then something moved in the grass.

"Did you say something?" asked Frank.

Alex shook his head.

A bird began to chirrup in the long grass of the slope as they went over the top of the hill, carrying the ladder between them. Their hearts stirring with a vague discontent that was already beginning to turn to resignation, they struck out across the interminable light of the day toward the town.

It Is Only

By LEONARD WOLF

It is only fair to a sluice gate
To open it occasionally,
To let the waters rush past the bars,
To let the lake behind the structural steel
And concrete stir; to give the fish
A flurry of dismay; to give the reeds
A chance to grapple with their roots.

So that it makes good sense that she
Whom, out of custom and delight he loved—
Her grey, quiescent eyes, her hand . . .
Cool at the palm and fingers, turning warm
Inside each wrist—should die
And leave him wondering how to close her eyes
While water tumbled through his fingertips.

LEONARD WOLF, who teaches English at San Francisco State College, has has his poetry published in a wide variety of magazines. His last appearance in the *Review* was in the Spring, 1958 issue.

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Ideology and Doctor Zhivago

By RICHARD HOWARD POWERS

■ Viewed from the standpoint of a myth or an ideology, life is no more than an abstraction. A recent Nobel Prize winner, Albert Camus, describes our plight. "Unfortunately," he writes, "we live in a time of ideologies, of total ideologies, ideologies so sure of themselves and of their imbecile reason, and their narrow truth, that they can see the salvation of the world only in their own domination." Presumably Boris Pasternak would agree. Now he too has won the Nobel Prize. In his winning, ideological considerations have not been absent. We do live in a time of ideologies. Part of the proof is in the latest award, and more of the proof is in the reception which *Doctor Zhivago* has been accorded in the United States.

Before the novel had appeared in English, when only a few excerpts had been published in the *Reporter*, Alfred Kazin wrote: "I have rarely encountered such excitement from people undisposed to literary enthusiasm" ("Letters," *Reporter*, August 7, 1958). This kind of excitement has become old hat. Yeats, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot have aroused a lot of it. In different circles James Gould Cozzens creates it. Ernest Hemingway caused a considerable amount of it with his *Old Man and the Sea*. This excitement has little to do with literary excellence. A writer of Cozzens' brilliance supplies many readers with the cheek to voice philistine political and social opinions, and so they love him. Another type of reader is emboldened when a writer with hair on his chest comes out against skepticism. Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot stir the feelings of an audience far greater

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than the one their poetry will ever reach. These different groups of non-literary enthusiasts have various purposes. D. H. Lawrence said once that heroes are heroes still, though their banners decay and stink. And so they are.

In our world even book reviews are weapons. Some of our most militant Freedom Fighters are stationed behind typewriters. And we are a united country. From the *Herald Tribune* to the *New Republic* we agree that Boris Pasternak has written a great novel. Those who thus unite wish to strike a blow for the free world. Under the banner of Doctor Zhivago we all march together—if not in step. But non-literary enthusiasts are one thing, and a brilliant literary critic like Alfred Kazin is quite another.

If newspapers which support the Mundts, the Goldwaters, and the Eastlands make capital out of a Russian novel which the *New Republic* calls "great," we have a problem to solve rather than a generalization to make. Is it art or politics which makes such strange bedfellows? Clearly the general press reaction had little to do with art. How much then has art had to do with the response of critics whose seriousness about literary matters is well established? My feeling is that many of these critics have failed to rise above the battle.

Zeal for the keys is an almost universal human weakness. Irving Howe declares that *Doctor Zhivago* is a major work of fiction, but "perhaps more important—a historic utterance. It is an act of testimony as crucial to our moral and intellectual life as the Hungarian revolution to our political life" (*New Republic*, September 8, 1958). Sad to say or not, the Hungarian revolution has not been crucial to our political life at all. In a rather narrow circle it has been a weapon with which to belabor dupes—a weapon lovingly accepted by one faction in that squabble between those no longer duped and those intransigently duped. The zeal that sometimes distorts Mr. Howe's vision relates particularly to this parochial and boring fratricide. He is not alone. *Doctor Zhivago* is another weapon, and the greater a novel it is, the more powerful a weapon it becomes.

Surely it would be grossly unfair to make Mr. Howe a whipping boy. But the prominence I give him in this matter is intentional. It is not that he is typical, but that he is not. Yet even he leaves to Soviet critics the privilege of saying some of the things about *Doctor Zhivago* which are true. If Boris Pasternak were an English writer

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writing about contemporary England from the same point of view from which he writes about the Soviet Union, I think that Mr. Howe would have said these things. The cold war infects us all.

Albert Camus writes that in the face of contemporary political society the only coherent attitude for the artist is either to renounce art, or, without any concession at all, renounce political society. Pasternak might agree, in theory. And since the appearance of *Doctor Zhivago* in this country there is a tendency to say that the novel is not "political."

In the New York *Times*, Marc Slonim wrote that Pasternak's book is "one of the most significant of our time and a literary event of the first order." Feeling that it would be wrong to attribute to Pasternak all the statements made by his protagonists, he concluded "there is no doubt that the basic attitudes of Pasternak's chief hero do reflect the poet's intimate convictions." Regarding the novel's political character, he wrote: "The book, despite all its topical hints and political statements [is] a basically anti-political work, in so far as it treats politics as fleeting, unimportant, and extols the unchangeable fundamentals of human mind, emotion and creativity" (New York *Times Book Review*, September 7, 1958).

Bertram D. Wolfe, whose credentials for passing judgment on art are less well established than those of Marc Slonim, declared that *Doctor Zhivago* is appearing in many translations "for the simplest of reasons: it is a truly great novel." Mojmir Soukup relates that the Vatican pavilion at the Brussels World Fair, "in line with the Vatican's long tradition of defending the right of the individual to read whatever he pleases," was passing out copies of a Russian edition of *Doctor Zhivago* to Soviet visitors (*New Republic,* December 8, 1958). According to Mr. Wolfe's logic, this might be further proof that the novel is a great work of art.

Ahead of time Mr. Wolfe suggested that the Nobel Prize Committee should do what they later did do. He pointed out to the Committee that here was "a great novel by a novelist who is also a fine poet and a great human being." The work was said to be "the greatest achievement of the Soviet years." Some private source of information sanctioned Mr. Wolfe's statement that the Lords of the Kremlin first thought to publish the novel and boast of it as being just that—a comment some might judge at least semi-hysterical. Mr.

Wolfe also belongs in the category of those who stress the non-political character of the novel: "This great novel was not written to defy the regime." In a sense it is autobiographical: "The theme of the novel, too, might seem to be a paradigm of the author's own life. It is the struggle of a noble individual to remain true to himself in the face of overwhelming forces, too great for him to alter or resist" (New York *Herald Tribune,* September 7, 1958).

Political action and creative activity are two faces of the same revolt. Both strive to create order and unity out of chaos. Camus writes that the artist cannot, even should he wish, be an accomplice of those who employ the language or the means of contemporary ideology. At the same time the artist is engaged politically, although involuntarily. "It is not," he writes, "combat which makes us artists, but art which forces us to be combatants." This viewpoint seems to be foreign to critics on the present United States scene. Max Ascoli has long been engaged politically, and some might think that his performance has been considerably to his credit. Nevertheless, in a half-page introduction to the first installment of excerpts from *Doctor Zhivago* in the *Reporter*, he thought it high praise to write that the novel might be called "an a-Communist, and not an anti-Communist book. Yet it is silly, or worse, to paste a political tag on a novel that is meant to put politics—any kind of politics—in its place." There remained the illogicality that the *Reporter* is a political, not a literary, magazine and that it is not in the habit of publishing excerpts from novels. Nor does Mr. Ascoli usually pretend to authoritative knowledge in artistic matters. (See the *Reporter*, July 10, 1958.)

In a letter congratulating the *Reporter* for printing the excerpts from *Doctor Zhivago*, Babette Deutsch stated that she believed the novel "to be one of the major works of the century," and that she agreed with Ascoli that it was "an a-Communist, and not an anti-Communist book." Later, in a review for *Harpers*, she wrote: "There seems small doubt that *Doctor Zhivago* will eventually be everywhere recognized as a classic. And this precisely because it is not a political book" (*Harpers*, September, 1958). She also suggested that "it would be absurd to make the error of identifying the protagonist with the author."

These are a few examples taken from the more moderate and more qualified reviewers who have expressed this viewpoint. These

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have been the comments generally made in this country about a novel which could also be described as outdoing "all the dissident 'negative' Soviet works of 1954-56 in its fundamental onslaught on the Bolshevik program as well as fulfillment" (George Gibian in the *New Leader*, December 8, 1958). Irving Howe remarks that "the novel is never in danger of becoming a mere tract" (*New Republic*, September 8, 1958). Even if one thinks this judgment mistaken and that the danger is frequently present or realized, Mr. Howe's remark is a reasonable one compared with the statements that the novel has nothing to do with politics.

In Europe the reception has been much more frankly "political," and it has been quite mixed. In England, for example, the London *Times* noted that Pasternak's refusal to play ball with the Soviet regime had gained him an "importance over and above his work." The reviewer observed that the author had "been the object of slightly malicious interest to the cultural freedom experts" (*Literary Supplement*, September 5, 1958). Philip Toynbee had his say in *Twentieth Century*. He noted the natural warm sympathy of reviewers, and suggested that this understandable attitude had led to wild overestimation of the work itself. He contradicted almost every American reviewer:

> Some reviewers have described this as a non-political book, and marveled that a work of "pure" art should have . . . emerged from . . . Soviet Russia. This is surely a mistaken judgment. *Doctor Zhivago* is a profoundly and consciously anti-communist work—not indeed in any counter-revolutionary sense. . . . The book, in fact, has a message in a perfectly simple sense, and in a sense which is harmful to its own inner life. . . . it jumps out at us too boldly. . . . (*Twentieth Century*, October, 1958).

As far as his contradiction goes he is correct.

Critics who are most emphatic in stating that *Doctor Zhivago* is not a political book, that it is not autobiographical, that it is a "pure" work of art, know that we do live in a time of ideology. All sophisticates know this perfectly well. That many reviewers insist that the novel is "pure" is simply evidence of their sophistication—their way of pleading innocent to the vulgarity of being ideologues.

What does it mean to be "political?" What is the virtue of being "a-political?" No critic bothers to say. A political novel has been described as a novel in which political ideas play a dominant role,

or in which the political milieu is the dominant setting. Whether or not Pasternak's novel is political in this sense is irrelevant, for surely no critic means to suggest that fitting or not fitting this category decides a novel's greatness. What we need is a definition of politics which would make politics a bad thing in a novel. Would a definition in common use do this for us? A widely used political science textbook begins:

> "The study of politics," says Harold Lasswell, "is the study of influence and the influential. . . . The influential are those who get the most of what there is to get." What there is to get may be summed up as power. The fruits of power are economic advantage, social prestige and security for those who possess it. Through the promulgation of laws, ordinances and decrees those in power apportion rights and privileges and enforce this apportionment by recognized sanctions. . . .
>
> More specifically, politics involves the translation of social pressures into public policies.[1]

This definition can be used for our purposes.

In my experience it has happened many times more than once, but I remember clearly one instance when a gathering of well-to-do "liberals" turned its attention to the servant problem. On that occasion the wife of a leader of liberal causes complained that the daughters of two servants who had been in her family for thirty years absolutely refused to follow in their parents' footsteps. These girls had been treated almost as members of the family—until the age of ten or so they had played games with the master's children, and even later had continued to receive many signs of affection and love. When they grew older they betrayed these kindnesses, and did not remain in service. They preferred to become stenographers, to live in cheap housing developments with husbands who worked in factories. Were the remarks of this woman "political?" I think so. And surely a novelist whose protagonists represent her viewpoint may be charged with writing a political book. For such a novelist is attempting to support or create sanctions for a particular apportionment of rights and privileges. He is pleading a special case—and insofar as he distorts truth in the interest of privilege he is a politician rather than an artist.

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[1]Peter H. Odegard and E. Allen Helms, *American Politics: A Study in Political Dynamics* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 1.

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Charles Peguy wrote that all affairs have their mysticisms and their politics, that all mysticisms are extraordinarily alike, and also all politics. He explained:

> The reason for our quarrels is that we invariably oppose our mysticism to the politics of our adversaries, and they retort by confounding our politics in the name of their mysticism, whereas in fact all mysticisms are not only alike but also complementary, and all politics are alike ignoble and antagonistic, for the former want to give and the latter to get.
>
> What causes degeneration of the mystical into the political? The answer is simple: personal ambitions.[2]

Tsarist censors were quite correct in banning *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*, for in one sense they are political. In Peguy's sense Shakespeare is never political, nor is any other artist in his work.

It seems to me that Pasternak stoops to conquer. All politics are ignoble, and the politics of *Doctor Zhivago* are no exception. In his review of the novel Edmund Wilson disassociated himself from the self-righteous attitude toward Russia which has become official in the United States. Secretary Dulles on hearing of the furor over *Doctor Zhivago* remarked that it illustrated "what I said last night." That was to say that international Communism insists on conformity not only in deed but in thought, and that anything "a little out of line they try to stamp out." Wilson points out that *Doctor Zhivago* is not merely a little out of line with the assumptions of the Soviet Union:

> it presents a radical criticism of all our supposedly democratic but more and more centralized societies. The criticism of Pasternak's novel is directed at conditions and tendencies which are in evidence all over the world and which have lately become pronounced in the United States (*New Yorker*, November 15, 1958).

Wilson makes his meaning clearer by quoting from the novel, and stating that the quotation might equally apply to us. Larisa says of the First World War:

> It was then that untruth came to the land of Russia. The first disaster, the root of future evil, was the loss of faith in one's own opinion. They imagined that the time had passed for them to pay attention to the

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[2]Roger Soltau, *French Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), p. 423.

> promptings of moral feeling, that one now had to sing with the general voice and to live by the general notions that were being thrust upon one.

This is a different kind of politics. Here Pasternak is engaged in the combat which Camus thinks all artists are engaged in willy-nilly. This is Peguy's mysticism—it pleads for no privilege. But Peguy's politics is also there.

Mojmir Soukup writes:

> the freedom that Doctor Zhivago and his kind seek is irreconcilable with any social and political system; and the system responds with equal intolerance though perhaps in different fashion, to the disturbing element in its midst. Pasternak is aware of it. He did not write an apology for his hero. He does not suggest absolute validity for the values by which Doctor Zhivago lives. They are presented for what they are, relative, and often highly subjective. He does assert the sacred, somehow primordial right of the individual to autonomous existence, if that is his need. But he does not protest the price such an individual must pay to the society. Pasternak at no point suggests that the price Doctor Zhivago is paying is disproportionate, or wrongfully exacted (*New Republic*, December 8, 1958).

If this were really so, the novel would be a far better novel than it is. But special pleading is harmful to its own inner life, "it jumps out at us too boldly." And the case is made so weakly, insofar as it is made, for "the sacred, somehow primordial right of the individual to autonomous existence." The romantic precept, "be yourself," by which was meant "be unique," has a far different ring in the last half of the twentieth century than when Byron was young.

Pasternak does suggest that the price Doctor Zhivago is paying is disproportionate and wrongfully exacted, and the critics who write that it is not counter-revolutionary must mean the term in some private sense. Pasternak does not suggest that pre-Revolutionary Russian society deserved to survive, or that it was wrong to destroy it. But when one compares his description of what existed before the Revolution to his description of what followed, it becomes clear that his emphasis is upon what was destroyed by the Revolution and that he sees no benefits gained which balance those losses. Surely this is a permissible point of view. The real question is to decide whether or not he does it justice. The critics are wrong in denying that he adopts it.

Yury's criticism of the Revolution is compounded of many things. While the Civil War still continued, he remarked: "Do you know

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why these never-ending preparations are so futile? It is because these men haven't any real capacity, they are incompetent. Man is born to live, not to prepare for life." At least a dozen reviewers have gloated over the phrase, "Man is born to live, not to prepare for life." It may contain poetry, not much substance. In the first place, who have been the competent? Was it Nicholas II, Rasputin, Bismarck, Metternich, or possibly Napoleon? Was Christ competent, was St. Augustine? At least the last two would have disagreed radically with the proposition that "man is born to live, not to prepare for life."

What is life? A large warm house, rich food, servants, a polite wife, an assured status? These are the things the Revolution took from Yury. Was Proust alive in a cork-lined room? Was Cervantes alive in the midst of squalor? What of Marx in London, Joyce in Paris, the great years of Rembrandt? Or was it Zola's Nana who really lived, and were the others only preparing? And, to get down to the case at hand, who was "living" in 1917 Russia? The critics ought to say.

Pasternak is conscious of Yury's limited vision, although he shares it with him. In another much-quoted remark he has Larisa say that it is only in mediocre books that people are divided into two camps: "in real life everything gets mixed up." If this sort of division makes a book mediocre, *Doctor Zhivago* is mediocre. Larisa points out to Yury that she "saw a lot of poverty as a child. That's why my attitude to the revolution is different from yours. It's closer to me. There's a lot I understand from the inside." And the two camps in the book are those whom Pasternak sympathizes with and understands and those who are beyond the pale—in one camp are people of his own background and advantages, in the other are the less fortunate. The one exception is an old one—a poor girl who is admitted because, unlike women of his own class, she is warm-blooded.

The disloyal family servant appears in *Doctor Zhivago*. An amusing thing about this servant is that after the Revolution he begins to attend a political club. Not that he acts amusingly. At his foolish club he accuses his masters of having kept him in ignorance, and deliberately concealing from him that man is descended from the apes. The reader might think that a society in which such a

charge is received with anything other than tolerant amusement is somehow at fault. It is not Markel who is most ridiculous.

On July 14, 1789, the Bastille fell. The victorious mob marched through the streets of Paris. The front rank carried the heads of those who had been massacred at the end of pikes. Babeuf was witness to this barbarism. He wrote to his wife: "Our masters have made savages of us, and they reap, and will continue to reap what they have sown." And if we do not blame Zhivago for Markel, it is partly because we are generous and forgiving. Forgiving as we may be, we might still harbor the wish that Zhivago shoulder some of the responsibility voluntarily. Russians have been quite capable of understanding this. Dostoevsky wrote a great deal to just this point. He called middle-class amusement at the expense of Markel and his kind "obscene." Ordinarily one would not expect an Alfred Kazin or an Irving Howe to use an adjective that was any weaker.

Quite simply Pasternak's loyalties are parochial—more specifically they are bourgeois. Critics who share this parochialism unconsciously assume that these attitudes express the universal consensus of Western civilization. Those who do not share but who fail to recognize it in Pasternak are more curious. For there are appalling instances of this parochialism in the novel. Upon one occasion Zhivago finds himself in an advanced position during a skirmish between Red and White forces. From this position Zhivago is a spectator as advancing White troops are mowed down by partisan fire. Pasternak describes his feelings: "With all his heart he wished them success. They belonged to families who were probably akin to him in spirit, in education, in moral discipline and values." Sympathy for men dying by rifle fire ought to be taken for granted among civilized men. Sympathy is increased by understanding, and understanding by association, class association or other. But Zhivago has been living for weeks and months with the partisans, ministering to them as a doctor. Ordinarily this kind of experience also makes for sympathy and understanding. In Yury's circumstances at least some men would be calling upon Heaven to stop the slaughter, not be wishing the youths on one side success with all their hearts. Better complexions and teeth, even more polished manners, would not seem to be what mattered most.

From the Christian point of view, and a few other "religious"

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points of view, virtue is defined in terms of humility and the absence of pride, in terms of the ability to sacrifice one's self for others. No word is used more frequently than "religious" to describe Pasternak's book. The right to individual freedom rests upon very respectable foundations. Some of us recognize the right of the individual to be himself, the right to demand a bill of divorcement from society. But the grounds for such a divorce can be called "irreligious" more properly than "religous." And even if indifference to "politics" is no sin, you cannot have your cake and eat it too. Zhivago wants to. He wishes for the privileges and pleasures of both kinds of existence. Put another way, he wishes for an exemption from politics while he demands that politics grant him the fruits of sacrifices made by others who have no such exemption. He wishes the privileges which a political system confers upon masters; he wishes none of the responsibilities that go with the privileges.

Yury is not without understanding. Upon his return to Moscow during the Revolution he is pleased to see that his wife has given up some of the rooms of their home. He remarks: "We should give up still more." When his wife, who still has several servants, complains of material hardships, Zhivago realizes that she is wrong. At a party given for his homecoming he senses "that only a life similar to the life of those around us, merging without ripple, is genuine life, and that an unshared happiness is not happiness. . . . And this was most vexing of all." It is vexing—how few even admit that it is true! This statement is but one of the signs that Pasternak might have written a far different novel had he had the fortune to develop and write under different circumstances—circumstances in which art was freer from politics. Unshared happiness is not happiness! What reviewer has seen fit to quote that? And truly, the thought is isolated. Self-indulgence smothers it.

Pasternak has Yury say of art: "Only the familiar transformed by genius is truly great. . . . Today, 'bourgeois' and 'petty bourgeois' have become terms of abuse . . . but Pushkin forestalled the implied criticism." This too has been quoted. But Yury fails to come to grips with the implied criticism—he stoops to polemics. We should not join him. Only the familiar transformed by genius is truly great. Yes indeed! But the "familiar" need not be TV commercials or illustrated Sunday school lessons, and to glorify these things because

they are commonplace, or because they are significant and prominent aspects of "bourgeois" society, would be far from anything Pushkin intended. What is called "proletarian" literature is as vulgar as what is called "petty bourgeois" literature. Any view of life which distorts truth for political purposes, whether it be in Hollywood or in Moscow, was not defended by Pushkin. To be artistic is to be accurate.

Edmund Wilson writes that nobody could have written *Doctor Zhivago* in a totalitarian state and turned it loose on the world "who did not have the courage of genius." Boris Pasternak's nobility, his greatness, and his courage are constantly referred to by other reviewers. Clearly I think his book reflects neither nobility nor greatness. We may admire rebelliousness for itself. The rebelliousness of the spoiled and pampered does not, however, fall within the category we usually admire. The morality lesson of Kipling's *Captains Courageous* is too pat, but many accept it. The spoiled child who suddenly finds himself among people who are indifferent to his will often acts irrationally. He is courageous only in the sense that he rebels in spite of the futility of doing so and in spite of the consequences. This has nothing to do with the courage of genius.

Courage for an artist in Russia would be the act of keeping faith in face of the conditions of existence. Courage would be proved by a work unmarred by special pleading and personal and private prejudice—a work which left questions of privilege to one side, one in which self-criticism did not give way to self-pity. Pasternak has failed to write such a book. Dudinstev's novel, *Not by Bread Alone,* which almost no American reviewer took seriously as a work of art, without being as pretentious as *Doctor Zhivago*, or, to be sure, without giving evidence of an author potentially of the first rank, is more artistic. Dudinstev, a man of less talent, has been less corrupted than Pasternak by the Soviet environment. His book is truly "a-political." It does not plead for a class, but for a kind of man, and it makes that plea in the name of humanity, not in the name of an individual who is that kind of man.

One thing remains to be said. Part of the proof that we live in a time of ideologies is in the latest Nobel Prize award. More of the proof is in the reception which *Doctor Zhivago* has been accorded in the United States. But most of the proof is in the fact that the

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work was refused publication in Russia. The novel was rejected by the editors of *Novy Mir* because of its spirit of non-acceptance of the socialist revolution. The essence of the editors' disagreement with Pasternak was openly admitted to have "nothing to do with aesthetic wrangling." The artistic aspect of the novel was an indifferent matter to those who judged it. And so "politics" decides—in Russia crudely, blatantly, and logically. Politics has decided in the United States as well—among our better critics it has not done so crudely or blatantly, and, above all, not logically. For few, if any, of the critics I have quoted would defend in theory what I believe they have done in practice.

He

By MEYER LIBEN

He is standing next to you
He is a signature in the air
He neither calls nor waves you away
He does not beckon, he does not dismiss
He does not ask a question, he does not give an answer
He is not exactly brilliant, but he is an enemy of the platitude
He works for the house, the odds are in his favor
Therefore we may detect a certain coolness
The sinister charm of the certain victor
Some call him dear, some call him fiend
He is sought, fled, and denied, he is accepted
("There's a bullet has your name on it")
He is a spur to livingness
To the sun buried deep inside of you.

MEYER LIBEN is a native New Yorker, now in business in the city. He has published both fiction and poetry.

Conversation on Santayana

By HORACE M. KALLEN, CORLISS LAMONT, JOHN H. RANDALL, JR., HERBERT W. SCHNEIDER, JAMES GUTMANN, ERNEST NAGEL, *and* MILTON MUNITZ

■ LAMONT. I thought it might be worthwhile just to sit around and chat about George Santayana among those of us who knew him to some extent or had some contact with him; and I was very glad to be able to get Horace Kallen to join us for the evening. I came across this little book on Harvard the other day, *College in a Yard,* edited by Brooks Atkinson; and there's a pragraph in here by Horace about Santayana, just one paragraph, in which he says that after class at Harvard he used to walk out with Mr. Santayana, asking him questions, and that this very quickly built up into teas and drinks and so on. Well, this is really a very enticing passage, and it seems to me that we might carry on from there, Horace, and go back to Harvard, where you were assistant to Santayana for several years, and see if you can recover some of those impressions.

KALLEN. It began really before I became his assistant, because I encountered him first as a freshman. You know Massachusetts Hall —as it was, not as it is. We sat on very long, rough benches, facing a small platform with a desk on it. The first time I saw Santayana, I saw a very dapper figure carrying a bowler hat, gloves, and cane.

This informal discussion of George Santayana (1863-1952) was held at the New York home of Dr. CORLISS LAMONT, Columbia Lecturer in Philosophy, who transcribed and edited the talk with the assistance of Mrs. Mary Josephson. Participating were Professor HORACE M. KALLEN of the New School for Social Research, Columbia University Professors JAMES GUTMANN, ERNEST NAGEL, JOHN H. RANDALL, JR., and HERBERT W. SCHNEIDER, and Professor MILTON MUNITZ of New York University.

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He walks in almost unnoticed, seats himself at the desk while the usual classroom rustle and noises continue, hardly subsiding. Then he begins to talk.

There is something in the voice, and something in the way he doesn't look at you. He never looked at you. I found out later he was terribly nearsighted. There was a turn of the eye that made you think of religious pictures. I finally got to see him as a sort of Murillo Madonna with a moustache—a stereotype.

Usually with lectures, even the best, there comes a time when you're bored. Students wriggle in their seats, move their hands, rustle their feet, make other noises. Not, however, these freshmen in Philosophy 1-A. You listen and look, even if you don't agree. Three or four weeks after the course began, I couldn't contain myself any longer. The things that were said were challenging, and somewhat controverted things I'd learnt from my father; so I stepped up to the desk and asked Santayana some questions. The answers took us across the Yard and over to Harvard Square. That peripatetic talk started a whole series. I wasn't living in Cambridge. When I was an undergraduate, the Yard was a place for buildings such as Massachusetts, Harvard or Seaver Halls, not a field of student life. This was 1902-03.

Santayana simply had an allure. It wasn't merely the voice; it was the way he addressed you. He talked pretty much as he wrote, and he wrote pretty much as he talked. Before I knew it, I was following him around. He had a noon course on Saturday, and he'd usually go to a football game, if there was a football game. It was across at Soldiers Field. I never had time to go to the game, but once he had a ticket for me, though I couldn't use it.

During my undergraduate years he was living on Brattle Street. It's an old house, now being used partly as a restaurant and partly as a place for the sale of I-don't-know-what—*objets d'art* supposedly. He had two rooms. Medici prints hung over the mantelpiece of the fireplace. And on his desk he had a couple of bowls filled with sand and in those bowls two long goose quills.

The goose quills fascinated me and absorbed my attention for a long time. I wondered what they meant. I discovered afterwards that they had been instruments of writing at Oxford when he was there, and he had carried them along; they had become a kind

of antique in his house which he didn't use any more. He wrote with a pencil.

And one day I asked him why he'd kept the quills. He pulled them out and threw them in the fireplace. Apparently something had broken with the question.

I think I took about every course that Santayana gave while I was an undergraduate. And they involved the history of philosophy, Greek philosophy—Greek philosophy at Harvard was a wonderful, exciting thing. He was then preparing *The Life of Reason*; and the course out of which it grew was called The Philosophy of History. It was given afternoons in Harvard Hall; we went up a flight of stairs, the side stairs—still standing. The platform was much higher than in Massachusetts Hall, and so he was raised very much above the audience. It was rare for a class to applaud at the end of a lecture, but usually once a week there would be a spontaneous outburst of applause.

He took my notes at the end of this two-term course; and as I had made side remarks and decorations, as well as recordings of what was said, I was a little disturbed; but they came back with pleasant comments. When I got through, I went to Princeton, and he went off also; the same two years that I was going to Princeton he was in Europe. And it was the first year, in 1904, that the first volume of *The Life of Reason* came out: *Reason in Common Sense*. The other volumes were produced soon after at intervals. He came back in 1906, and I, having been more or less kicked out of Princeton, came back too. Naturally I gravitated in his direction.

In the interval Emerson Hall had begun to function. (Emerson Hall was set up in 1903.) There he was in the modern classroom way down in front, waiting for students to come to talk to him. I somehow recognized the back, the posture, the character of the head; but when he turned around, there was a beard. A beaver. And the type of expression, the character and quality of the man were changed; there was something strange that didn't belong. He didn't carry that beard for more than half a term, but in the interval Denman Ross, who was a great master of science—though perhaps not of the art of painting—made a portrait of him with the beard, the derby, the gloves, and the stick. I don't know what has become of that portrait; it may be hanging in Emerson Hall, alongside Mrs.

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Riebers's collocation of James, Palmer, and Royce, but I am not sure. For a long time Ross kept it at home. He was doing it in some particular Spanish style, and I think he said in the manner of Velasquez. It would be difficult to identify now, except that every time I think of that portrait—there is something about the New England judgment of Santayana in it; and that judgment was not friendly. It was admiring but dubious; and Santayana felt it very much.

The kind of people that were around him I never could make much of. There was Pierre La Rose, a kind of precious Copeland. He was Copey with the kind of difference that ladylike manners and attitude made. And he used to court Santayana a good deal. He was around, and there were undergraduates who were on the *Advocate* and the *Monthly* in those early days when I was living in a settlement house in Boston; and I remember one time when a group of us were all there together, and he brought out his jug of Glengarry whisky. He had a wonderful taste in whisky that he must have acquired at Oxford.

Well, then—the walks across the Yard, walking sometimes to Roslindale, where his mother lived. He never asked me in or explained. His mother was very old and wasn't seeing anybody; but I think he didn't want anybody to see her. It was clear that he didn't like her from the way he talked about her. But so long as she lived he was a devoted son, and at least once a week he would be going down there. And if there were questions to discuss, on most occasions I would walk down with him.

Well, that's the undergraduate story. When I came back, the choice between taking a degree in English and taking a degree in philosophy was never a true choice because all my preferences were weighted. On the one side you had Santayana, and you had William James, then Hugo Münsterberg, and in a lesser way you had Josiah Royce. And in an entirely negative way you had Palmer. On the other side you had Kitty—Kittredge—and George Baker and Barrett Wendell (I wasn't doing much with Barrett Wendell at the time) and a lot of philologists I didn't care about particularly. So I naturally decided for philosophy when the Department offered me a fellowship and the Department of English didn't.

That year [1906] I became Santayana's assistant and stayed

there until I left for Wisconsin. He really got me the job at Wisconsin.

When his mother died, he shook the dust of Cambridge and New England and the United States off his feet. No matter what inducements were offered him to return, he wouldn't return. I think Wendell Bush[1] at one time tried to get him to come back. Bush had a great admiration for him.

I remember a talk shortly after, by a fellow named Lightner Witmer, or Whitman, a professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, one of those fathers of connectionism or naive behaviorism, who published a magazine, one number of which was devoted entirely to the denunciation of the Harvard Department of Philosophy and Psychology. And he summed up Royce as an exponent of obscurantism, James as an exponent of occultism, and Münsterberg as a bluff. And of course we were talking about it and Santayana said, "I suppose he didn't regard Palmer and me as important enough, or he would have said, 'drivel and atheism.'"

Well, that's all that I think of. . . .

LAMONT. How do you explain, Horace, Harvard's attitude towards Santayana, which has always been less friendly and less sympathetic than Columbia's, for instance; and I think that holds true even today?

KALLEN. Well, he had been brought up as a Catholic. The sister —who to a very great degree was an actual mother to him and to whom he was bound in a very intense way, much more so than to his mother, whom he clearly didn't like—was a devout Catholic; and even when he was already going to the Latin School, he used to be taken to mass and whatnot. And they went around not far from where they lived to Boston College, where there was this Catholic emphasis. Now Catholicism in Cambridge and in Boston and New England was identified with shanty Irish. It had no form or grace, nothing of the Latin quality about it; and it went also with corrupt politics and all the rest.

The anti-Catholic tradition, which was much older than Santa-

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[1]Professor Wendell T. Bush of the Columbia Philosophy Department, 1905-1941.

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yana's generation, regarded the presence of the perceptual Catholicism as somehow a carrier of evil. And then I suspect that his sister's father, Sturgis (whom his mother had married in the Philippines) and her family, which was a good stable New England family, carried a kind of resentment which could easily have become part of the social atmosphere. And as Beacon Hill and that part of Cambridge were close together, Santayana was marginal to it.

You must start with a certain detachment and feeling of aliency that he always had, always manifested, a kind of distant all-is-warm quality, a banked warmth. He was so tremendously kind to students—and in fact he often scolded me for being too hard on them in section meetings and in grading exams. But that was like an aristocrat's kindness; it was largesse; it wasn't a free gift in most cases; and that kind of thing is extremely attractive to certain temperaments and very disturbing to others.

Well, in the development of the academic scene he worked essentially, I would say, from what you might call Catholic or pre-Catholic premises. The Greeks, the Greeks fundamentally, caught his concentration while he was at Oxford, working on Greek philosophy. His tutor was Henry Jackson, who was one of the chief people who contributed to dating Platonic dialogues, if I remember correctly.

There was always this social distance between him and the whole of New England. Then he became suspect, of course, as a critic of the genteel tradition. In the Spanish war he was definitely sympathetic to the Spanish interest without complete commitment to it. In fact he had some verses about Spain and America, if I remember correctly, that would indicate that he had a certain indignation. And the social distance spread as his philosophy developed, and the glamor that it had for certain types of undergraduate minds. Less graduate, more undergraduate. The graduates all went for Royce or for James; more for Royce than for James. They went very little for Santayana. They took courses with him; but it was only to have had a course with Santayana rather than to understand his thought and how he was thinking—*that* was philosophically condemned. So he lived in a miserable way all the time.

He was pursued by ladies from Beacon Hill and Cambridge. There was Mrs. Toy, for example. Professor Toy was from the

South, and he had a much younger wife who was also a Southern belle, and she was very, very pleasant.

At a tea party after Santayana had moved to an apartment, Prescott Hall, on Cambridge Street, there were a Mrs. Winslow, Mrs. Toy, and some other lady from Beacon Hill, some young undergraduate poet, myself—I think there was another person, another man, but I can't remember who it was. Santayana was giving us tea; and you got the sense of an adoration of a matinee idol that was in these women's attitude, and Mrs. Toy's concern was apparent; but that didn't mean that a Southern belle coming up into Cambridge should be interested in a Spanish cavalier. All this had nothing to do with the attitude of authentic Cambridge or authentic Boston. He was basically an outsider.

LAMONT. In the volume of Santayana's letters[2] there are a number which were sent to Mrs. Toy. He is supposed to have written more letters to her than to any other single person.

KALLEN. That can very well be. There's a lady that William James wrote more letters to than he wrote to his wife. I've forgotten her name, but she is in the letters of William James that Ralph Perry edited.[3]

RANDALL. Well, that's natural; it's more important to *talk* to his wife.

MUNITZ. What sort of courses did Santayana give on the graduate level? Were they very much different from those on the undergraduate level?

KALLEN. There was a seminar in Aristotle, for example; that was more limited subject matter; also a discussion of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume on occasion; but he wasn't interested in that kind of thing very much. He wasn't interested in straight historic courses on the exposition of special thinkers. And I don't recall in the cata-

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[2]Cory, Daniel, ed., *The Letters of George Santayana.* (New York: Scribner, 1955.)

[3]Perry, Ralph Barton, *The Thought and Character of William James.* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1935.)

logues anything like the subjects usually offered as a rule in graduate courses in philosophy.

NAGEL. Horace, did he give courses corresponding to *The Life of Reason*?

KALLEN. He called it The Philosophy of History.

NAGEL. I forget where, but there is a story that when Santayana came to write the fifth volume[4] he was so distressed with the idea of having to write on that subject that he apparently suffered acutely.

MUNITZ. That's the legend.

KALLEN. Well, now, it could be because it meant abstracting from the over-all perspectives this special detail. The division into volumes was a literary device that didn't take form in the lectures at all. The reorientation was different of course.

SCHNEIDER. Well, the first volume didn't fit into the philosophy of history, did it? Or did he put that in?

KALLEN. I think it began with a discussion of the nature of history, if I remember correctly, and then moved into the subject of what common sense means, rather than the term "reason and common sense." I had a feeling after the books began to appear that there was a considerable distance between the material of the lectures and the material of the book. And some day I am going to find my notebook, if it hasn't been lost or destroyed; and if I can handle the labor and live long enough, it will be entertaining to compare the lectures and the books.

SCHNEIDER. You don't know that Santayana wrote *Reason in Common Sense* first, do you?

KALLEN. I don't know. I know it was published first.

RANDALL. Did he himself lecture from notes?

KALLEN. He had in his pocket a piece of paper; and every so often he would peer down very close. And then he would talk. I couldn't see that the notes amounted to much. I think they were suggestions.

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[4] *Reason in Science*, 1925.

When he started talking, the pattern seemed to be spontaneous and to develop of itself.

LAMONT. But he talked, you say, the way he wrote—I mean that same beautiful style and cadenced sentences?

KALLEN. Yes, it was an astounding thing. It was perfect composition and perfect timing. He never ended a lecture in the middle the way both James and Royce did. There would be a beginning, a middle, and an end.

NAGEL. Horace, coming back to *The Life of Reason* once more, I forget now where Santayana remarks that it was a sort of Hegelian phenomenology with a different general philosophical orientation. Did he give courses in Hegel?

KALLEN. Not in my time. He didn't like Hegel. He gave courses *about* Hegel which were devastating, but not *in* Hegel.

GUTMANN. I forget the dates of the sonnets. Was he writing his sonnets during the period while you were associated with him?

KALLEN. When he was packing up, ready to go to Europe—I'd come down for the summer; this was 1912, I think—and he was giving me a number of books—William James's *Principles of Psychology,* which he inscribed to me and then I gave away to somebody who didn't like Harvard—then he gave me a set of Leopardi, and I leafed it through in Italian and I found verses, some of them translations and others his own verses in his own writing. And I thanked him for them. He said, "Oh, no, you can't have those." Those he took away, but I've got Leopardi; but I would much rather have had Santayana's verses.

GUTMANN. These were verses that never were published?

KALLEN. So far as I know, never.

GUTMANN. Did that represent a negative attitude on his part?

KALLEN. No, I suspect that on one side it was an intellectual exercise like doing a crossword puzzle, and that on the other side there was some feeling, private feeling, that he didn't want to share. I

couldn't even read them. He took them right away. I don't know what Cory has.[5]

RANDALL. I once asked Santayana why he did not write more poetry, and he answered that poetry was not congenial to the spirit of the age.

LAMONT. Some of the sonnets, I believe, he wrote when he was very young.

KALLEN. Most of the sonnets were composed while he was a student. Soon afterwards he completed *Philosophers at Court*[6] that Cory has published, known as very entertaining drama. It would be fun for philosophers to get together and distribute the parts and read them out, because it is full of irony and wisdom. And it puts a position—you've read it, Ernest? It's a really satisfying drama. And of course, there's *Lucifer*. *Lucifer* belongs to his youth and indicates his own conflict, which was more than a conflict with doctrine, because it meant breaking with his sister and the resolution that came with it.

NAGEL. What was Santayana's attitude towards your reforming zeal?

KALLEN. He tolerated it. He thought that I was wasting a scholar's time, but he could understand that I might do it to make a living.

RANDALL. Was he especially close to anybody on the Harvard faculty?

KALLEN. I can't recall any single person except Pierre La Rose; and he wasn't close to La Rose; La Rose wanted to be close to him. Quite another thing. Or Bag Fuller [B. A. G. Fuller]. Fuller was for a while a genuine disciple of Santayana's.

NAGEL. Do you know what political views Santayana expressed—if any—during those years? Did he have any?

KALLEN. Well, it was not known. The talk about politics was in

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[5]Daniel Cory is Santayana's literary executor.

[6]Included in *The Poet's Testament*, 1953.

the Platonic and Aristotelian line; but after he had left, you know, the year before I went west, there was a young gang of whom Walter Lippmann was the head and front; and there was a Harvard Socialist Society that Lippmann headed up, and they, that whole group, were great *aficionados* of Santayana. They took the course in aesthetics and so on. When Santayana went abroad, I think about 1912, the year that his mother died, we had an exchange of letters about something, and in one of those letters he said, "Well of course you may think you are a socialist. In this way, I'm a socialist too." But it didn't mean socialism in the sense of a party and all the rest. It meant a certain attitude toward human relations, structure of government.

LAMONT. Coming back to his relationship with Harvard, of course he was fairly popular among some people there. He became a member of the Delphic Club, which was one of the main clubs of the University—

KALLEN. As an undergraduate.

LAMONT. Well, actually, no. He was taken in as a graduate member, which was very unusual.

KALLEN. It would be, but I don't know anything about that. I don't think that that was so much a matter of popularity as a matter of distinction, like taking in a football player.

LAMONT. Yes, yes. But what I don't understand is that the Harvard Philosophy Department over these decades hasn't come to appreciate Santayana more. I mean on an intellectual basis. There may have been the bias against him that you describe. Is it due really to the fact that they're just not sympathetic to his philosophy, and that some of us down this way are?

KALLEN. They're not particularly sympathetic to his philosophy, and yet the core of *The Life of Reason* is very close to James. But the intent was so different.

GUTMANN. In what sense are you using the word "core"?

KALLEN. I'd say the postulates of adjustment and adaptation and the relation of most of the processes of thinking to the values of

living. It seems to me that what Santayana absorbed from James's *Psychology*[7] was that mind emerged as a biological function in the struggle for survival. The whole conception of the life of reason not as a development of self-mastery or as a mastery of the world around you, but a *vita contemplativa,* comes much later than the birth of intelligence. Santayana was James's pupil and psychology was in the making, you see; the whole thing was in its early stages, in process; and what came out afterwards was a new direction. It was the perversion, you might say, of the pragmatic spirit of the Catholic value system.

On the personal side, James had befriended Santayana as he had befriended so many of us. Santayana always talked about him with a kind of malicious reverence. He felt indebted, he liked him, and yet he resented him.

SCHNEIDER. Well, I'd always imagined that Santayana's playing with pre-rational, rational, and post-rational was a working over of James's *Psychology*.

KALLEN. Yes, I believe that.

RANDALL. What was Royce's attitude towards Santayana?

KALLEN. As if he were a loving, rebellious, and angry son.

MUNITZ. He did his doctor's dissertation under Royce, did he not?

KALLEN. No, a combination. The doctoral dissertation was on this German—

SEVERAL VOICES. Lotze.

KALLEN. And I am not sure whether it was Royce or James or the other man, Bowen, who had most responsibility for it. I don't know.

MUNITZ. I recall looking at the manuscript of it at Cambridge, and what impressed me among other things was something in the handwriting which was very similar to what you've described in connection with his oral delivery—namely, that there was never an erasure, never a change; and I'm quite sure that he must have written even the first draft as a perfectly finished thing.

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[7]William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 1890.

KALLEN. I've had manuscripts of his, and there would be hardly an erasure. I had the entire manuscript of *Three Philosophical Poets,* reading it over at the time, and it was just like that. He had three Manila envelopes. You took out of them yellow sheets, ruled yellow sheets, and there was that clear, precise hand which—maybe it belonged to the generation—William James had a beautiful articulate hand like that; Royce had an awful hand and Münsterberg's was German. Palmer's hand I never saw.

NAGEL. Did you ever feel the obvious disdain that Santayana shows in his published writings toward the Hebraic tradition?

KALLEN. No, not at all. This question comes up every so often, Ernest; and it comes up in connection not only with Santayana, but with T. S. Eliot, and Barrett Wendell, and other close friends of mine. Now I think there's a distinction to be made. Santayana's condemnation of what he called the Hebraic tradition was part and parcel of the intellectual rejection of a world of flux and change and drama and salvation, in favor of the well-ordered Hellenic world. It had nothing to do with living Jews as such. As it happened, you know, most of the students who were meaningful to him and to whom he was meaningful, were Jews. And his—

RANDALL. They're not so close to the Hebraic tradition these days.

KALLEN. Well, most of them were evidently—quite evidently—un-Hebraic. I wasn't. With Eliot, the same thing. The same way with a whole certain aspect of the New England generation that became very disturbed about immigration, and condemned types, while loving people. Jewishness is a sin, but you love the sinner.

GUTMANN. You mentioned the furnishings of his first rooms. Besides the goose quills, you spoke of some pictures, pre-Raphaelite. Were they his own selection?

KALLEN. They were pre-Raphaelite. They were his own selection. Not Rossetti prints; *Medici* prints.

GUTMANN. I was interested in their significance as objects of his choice.

KALLEN. They were significant, yes. Catholic. A triptych. I don't

remember now what the theme was. I have simply the image of the picture over the fireplace.

GUTMANN. I know less, probably, than the rest about his particular tastes and enthusiasms with respect to painting or other works of art.

KALLEN. Well, he didn't have much art work when he was living in Rome. Did you ever go to his rooms at the Bristol, Herbert?

SCHNEIDER. Yes, but—

KALLEN. Did he ever say to you, "Well, you know, this is a hotel room, like a cocotte's?"

I went up there, and he dug out of the bottom drawer of his bureau the medal for literature that Robert Bridges had gotten for him in England; it was quite a big notable thing. And then somebody told me that when Mussolini was inviting contributions for the Ethiopian war Santayaña contributed that, and it turned out to be gilt!

GUTMANN. I'm glad to hear it was that. Someone said it was the Butler Medal.[8]

NAGEL. Horace, on the one occasion when I did see him, walking through the streets of Rome, I asked him whether he listened to any music. He said no. But he wrote so sensitively about it. Did he listen to music when you knew him?

KALLEN. I don't remember his ever having gone to a concert or being concerned about music as an actual experience in any gathering—

RANDALL. He didn't play anything?

KALLEN. No, he didn't play any instruments. He drew; he was a very good draftsman, and made many cartoons for the Harvard *Lampoon*.

MUNITZ. He considered going into architecture.

KALLEN. One of the ironical occasions in Rome was when I was

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[8]A gold medal for distinction in philosophy established by President Nicholas Murray Butler in 1915.

going to interview Mussolini, who had exploited the word "pragmatism" and "pragmatist" greatly through the New York *Times* and elsewhere. Mussolini was telling Americans that he was a pragmatist; he believed in action and so on; and a good many absolute idealists took it up and exploited it over here—

VOICE. Marxists took it up too.

KALLEN. I went to see Mussolini, and at that time, Santayana was going to Fiesole to visit with Charles Strong[9] every so often. Strong had a special car made. He was paralyzed and had contraction. And so the day of the interview both Santayana and Strong came down in Strong's car, and they waited across from the Chigi Palace until I got out, to hear what happened. They seemed very—excited. They were eager to hear the details. And I was a little let down by that eagerness. And they were let down by what I told them.

LAMONT. What did you tell them?

KALLEN. I told them that Mussolini didn't know what pragmatism was, that he may have seen the name in the newspaper, but didn't know what he was talking about. And I practically told Mussolini that.

SCHNEIDER. Santayana made one nasty crack about Mussolini while I was there, about the same week, I guess, that you called on Mussolini; he was full of the subject. He said, "Well, I must say Mussolini's good for these Italians. He makes them behave more like Englishmen!"

LAMONT. Well now, why didn't Santayana ever want to set foot in America again, even though attractive offers were made him?

KALLEN. I can't say why. I don't know what was at the bottom of his heart, but I can tell you this, which may be a symptom. After we moved the New School from 23rd Street to 12th Street, we thought it would be a very good thing to have some significant figure, so to speak, to baptize the new habitation. And I got some people to agree to subscribe the necessary amount to bring Santayana over if he could come over. And I invited him. It was a personal

[9]Professor Charles A. Strong, an American psychologist.

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matter. I made it personal. And he wrote back that he would like to come; he *would* come; but there's Harvard. (I have the letter somewhere.)

Now this was twenty years after he had left Harvard. His unwillingness to go back there seems like a neurosis, doesn't it? And I can't guess—

RANDALL. The New School isn't so very much like Harvard.

KALLEN. Had nothing to do with it. He didn't think that he could come to America without going to Harvard; therefore he wouldn't come to America.

SCHNEIDER. The reason he gave me one day when I tried to urge him to come to Columbia was that, "Well, I'd like to see America again, but if I came over, you'd make me lecture, and I don't want to lecture."

KALLEN. Well, that's another rationalization.

LAMONT. Didn't he enjoy teaching?

KALLEN. He said he didn't. And yet I don't know of any of that group, except James, who went out more—and with more openness and concern to students in communication, exchange; and he had a kind of generosity about it that seemed to me unusual in any teacher. Now whether he enjoyed this kind of thing or not—perhaps it was a form of penance. But he was very effective. Where he was effective, he was terribly effective.

MUNITZ. Is he the kind of teacher who ever made use of the Socratic technique?

KALLEN. No, he lectured. And after the lecture if you wanted to talk to him, he was there; he'd stay. And then there would be often Socratic irony. He was particularly Socratic with the athletes who were enrolled in the courses and whom he graded up when I graded them down.

SCHNEIDER. Once Santayana told me, "I always like to associate with young people, but I don't like to have them treat me as a teacher, nor do I like to treat them as students."

KALLEN. Well, that's Socratic, isn't it?

SCHNEIDER. When I first learned to know Santayana at Paris, I wanted to see him badly, and I couldn't; he wouldn't answer the doorbell. Then I found out later. He apologized. He said, "Strong's daughter's just run away with this South American, and I owe something to my friend. I've had to help him through this crisis." And he was very considerate.

KALLEN. Well, that he would be in any circumstance. Whenever there was a crisis or an issue, he was on the spot. He did what he felt was essential and necessary. But that has nothing to do with over-all attitudes. You see them together day in, day out for a week or so, and you get a sense of the give-and-take, and that's the sense that I got. Now this capacity of Santayana's for honorable dealing—feelings of obligation and commitment—was very strong in him. So far as I'm concerned he was not only a teacher whom I got to love—there was that quality about him of allure and so on—but he was a real sustaining benefactor.

One time I got sick in Cambridge and I had to go to the infirmary—very lame—and a number of undergraduates were there, including Lippmann; and up comes Santayana to see me. Now it's an unheard-of-thing, you know, at Harvard, that a teacher should come to visit a pupil like that. And actions of that kind run through the record, and those are quite different from anything that appears in the formal projection of the man. The true image of the man is in the novel, *The Last Puritan*. It's not in the autobiographical stuff, which is a shield and a deception, really.

SCHNEIDER. I think in his last autobiographical volume Santayana spoke of Strong in a condescending manner, but it seemed to me that was unjust to his actual relation to him.

NAGEL. Well, your remark about his attitude towards Strong strikes me as being true of actually every person that he wrote about in these autobiographies—everybody was an instrument to him.

SCHNEIDER. Yes, but that wasn't quite true of him.

KALLEN. No, no, not true of him. He had to shut them out; he had to establish his independence and the sovereignty of the soul, so to speak, this dweller in the eternal. It seemed to me the most

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pitiful remark that probably had ever come from him or from any philosopher who was as disillusioned as he, to say, "I live in the eternal," which was in an interview somebody had with him after the war. And my final feeling about him was that he was a lonely and yearning person who had to defend himself against his own emotions and so on, and that he built these structures.

RANDALL. Did he have to be lonely?

KALLEN. Well, I don't think it was from choice. It seemed to me that when you take the personal history and you get the feel of the familial relations—an unloved child of a late marriage with an enormous distance of years between himself and sister; and the mother, the mother to whom he wasn't anything that she could be concerned about—you get the image of him in isolation and alone, as off in a corner, drawing by the lamp, and nobody paying any attention to him. This seems to me the projection of the entire concentration of his experience. Now if he had met, at the time he went through the Latin School and beyond, people with other attitudes and other dimension, maybe the whole diathesis would have changed. But he got set on that gradient, and he started building defenses against it.

GUTMANN. Will you explain what you mean in speaking of the autobiography as a *deception*?

KALLEN. Self-deception, and maybe a deception of others too. Maybe also a revenge on the world.

GUTMANN. There is a sentence—I think I can quote it exactly—that's always puzzled me. If I'm not mistaken, it's the first sentence of the last chapter in the third volume,[10] in which he says, "The world is peopled by persons and places." There are such wonderful descriptions of places in that volume: Cambridge, Rome, stand out. But I think perhaps persons were to him of the same species as places, essentially. I don't know whether that's saying something different from what you said in speaking of them as instruments. At least, Ernest generalized the term, "instruments." Did Santayana lack interest in personality?

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[10] *My Host the World*, 1953.

KALLEN. I tried to see him in contact and communication with the course of daily life, and I decided he had this, a present and warm interest, though a little detached. I think that the formulations are defensive rather than descriptions.

RANDALL. Well, in connection with Strong, for example, this business in the autobiography about Strong not having any students. As a matter of fact I had occasion to go through the records, and the number of students in each class was given in the records during the nineties; and Strong had about five times as many students as Cattell, for example.

KALLEN. Yes, yes. Now, how Santayana comes to the conclusion that Strong didn't have any students—he may not have had many followers; that's what he may have meant.

SCHNEIDER. Well, I may have read some of my own feelings into their feelings; but Strong had such delightful parties up there in Fiesole, and Santayana seemed to enjoy them very much. He went up there quite frequently and had delightful conversations and tea. When Strong came to Rome, they'd go out in his car on the Via Appia because Strong enjoyed reading the Latin inscriptions; and Santayana seemed to enjoy them too. He took me along a few times.

KALLEN. Did he take you along as a participant? Was he participating or did he go along, much as a nurse goes along with small children she looks after?

SCHNEIDER. Well, I remember one of the first times I'd met him, while I spent that winter in Rome. We had a regular tea date every Wednesday afternoon. And it became perfectly mechanical as far as the physics of it went. We had our tea in the Via Veneto, and then we'd walk to the Pincio and end up in the café of the Pincio, look out at St. Peter's at sunset, and walk back; and it was a regular routine with him which I enjoyed very much, but it became quite a routine. Well, at one of the first tea parties we had, I happened to have Will Durant's *The Story of Philosophy,* which had just come out; and I showed Santayana the diagram in which he had been put right after Herbert Spencer; and his eyes opened big, and he said, "Well! That fellow has real perception!" And he was

evidently very much pleased. He said, "That's where I belong—I can see it, and that's where I'd like to be."

RANDALL. Well, now Montague[11] said that during the nineties, when he was at Harvard, the students all regarded Santayana as a kind of Spencerian.

SCHNEIDER. Well, Santayana reminisced a little then. He said, "I can't be an American; and I can't be a Spaniard, and I haven't any interest in Spain because my socialist Spain is gone. I think that as a matter of duty perhaps I should end my days in Biarritz maybe, but it doesn't appeal to me. So the best I can do, I think, is to go down as an Englishman. And I regard my stay at Oxford as a real residence; and if I go down in history at all, I'd like to go down not as a philosopher but as a man of letters. And I'd like to go down as the last of the Victorians." And I belive this reference to Spencer suggested this theme to him.

KALLEN. Yes, perhaps.

SCHNEIDER. He mentioned that several times.

RANDALL. Did that attitude towards England come out when you met him?

KALLEN. Yes, that was present all the time. I went to England as much because of him as because of James.

MUNITZ. Was that about the time he wrote "The Unknowable" for the Herbert Spencer Annual Lecture?

SCHNEIDER. No, that was later.

LAMONT. But it's interesting that he regarded this as one of the best things he ever wrote.

SCHNEIDER. While I was in Rome, he wrote that little volume, *Platonism and the Spiritual Life*. And he said, "I thought it high time that somebody took the unction out of spirituality."

KALLEN. It's still high time!

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[11]Barnard Professor of Philosophy William Pepperell Montague, Harvard Class of 1896.

SCHNEIDER. He left a lot of it in. Then one day I was much surprised. He said, "At last I'm working on a novel! And I know the first sentence. The first sentence will be, 'Oliver's mother thought he was very unfortunate in his father.' And Oliver's my hero, and I think I'll call it *The Ultimate Puritan*. I mean the dialectically ultimate Puritan, because he's a man who very conscientiously believes he shouldn't have a conscience. And that's my predicament. And I have a double story here. This Mario is the man I think I ought to be, but I can't help liking Oliver; and that's the trouble."

So he talked to me; he went on a little with the plot and narrated a few scenes which he thought were really humorous (I couldn't see the humor); but it was very obviously autobiographic.

KALLEN. And far more authentic than the autobiographical books. Partly because he assumes that it's disguised.

SCHNEIDER. Then a little later he began talking about the life of Christ. He said, "I think I'd like to write a life of Christ before I die; and if I do, I'll start the life of Christ with the Mount of Transfiguration; that's where it begins." And he did a little of that in his *Idea of Christ in the Gospels*. But that idea he played with for many years, I know. And he played with the *Dominations and Powers*, as he called it; but he said he never would publish that.[12]

KALLEN. The roots of it were already in *The Life of Reason*.

NAGEL. Was his memory as good as he pretended when he recalls all the courses that he had and the various dinners that he had twenty years before? I think it was really remarkable.

RANDALL. When I saw him, he said he was very much afraid that his memory was going, and he couldn't write anything sustained any more.

SCHNEIDER. By the time he wrote his autobiography, his memory was certainly going.

KALLEN. It was a good memory, but only for so much; it apparently had ceased to be so.

LAMONT. About his loneliness, he chose, after all deliberately, after

[12]The book was published in 1951.

he went to Europe—didn't he?—to lead a rather isolated life. That is, he was glad to see people, Americans who came by once in a while, and he played around with Strong; but then he did choose to be alone most of the time; and if he was lonely, didn't he pretty much enjoy it?

KALLEN. He didn't make any effort. He didn't resist companionship if it offered itself, but I doubt whether he had the will or the hunger for it.

RANDALL. When did he stop going back to Spain and Avila?

KALLEN. Oh, that was long before he had settled in Rome. When I saw him, his sister was still alive in Avila.

SCHNEIDER. When I first knew him, he didn't give me the impression so much of loneliness as simply of seclusion. He said, "I don't have to travel and see the world because enough of the world comes to see me. But as for the Italians, there's a problem. You see, the only Italian I allow to visit me is Vivante.[13] I must keep my distance from the Italians; otherwise I'd be swamped with them; so I purposely seclude myself from the Italians, but I have enough visitors to give me a sociable time." He didn't seem to mind it.

KALLEN. Well, I think you can be unsecluded and lonely, and secluded and lonely. You see, what you shut out is one thing, but what you want and don't get is another. And it's difficult to say what Santayana wanted, what kind of emotional security was involved. One thinks back to the mother and sister all the time. But of course you can be profoundly imposed upon by too much company and get lonelier and lonelier.

SCHNEIDER. My wife and I were together at these tea parties with Santayana; but one day I wanted to talk the doctrine of "essences" to him, and I really wanted to find out what he would say to my criticism of his doctrine of essence. So I urged Carol not to come with me that time, to let me go alone; and I showed up alone. And he said, "Why isn't Mrs. Schneider with you?" And I said, "Well, she couldn't come today." Then he was a little disgruntled; but we walked to the Pincio, and as we walked I started giving him a lec-

[13]Professor of Philosophy Leone Vivante of Siena.

ture on the subject of essences, and telling him I thought there was a big difference between essences in sense experience, and *conceptual* essences. He didn't seem to see the point at all, so I repeated it; and he seemed awfully stupid. And I got tired of repeating it, and he finally said, "Yes, I've heard of concepts, but what of it?" And I shut up; he didn't say anything more.

KALLEN. Yes, he did not like sermons.

LAMONT. Well, when I saw him in Rome in 1950 I got the same impression as you, Herbert, about his leading a secluded life. He was very pleasant to me, and our talk was pretty much technical philosophy subjects for two afternoons, and I couldn't help wondering whether what I would call his chosen seclusion was in his own mind in order that he might continue this tremendous output of great philosophical work. Or don't you think he thought in those terms?

KALLEN. I don't think he did. I don't think he had a plan or project after *The Life of Reason*. I think occasions provoked him to expression; and then when he went at it, he went at it in one continuous swoop. His mode of writing indicates a kind of slow pattern of continuity of thinking; and most of the things that he has to say after *The Life of Reason*—when they're not social, not like *Soliloquies in England* or *Character and Opinion in the United States*—are like *The Realm of Essence, The Realm of Matter,* and so on; they're re-statements, as independent variables, of things, that have a quite different meaning and color when they come together in the total stream.

LAMONT. Oh, yes, but he kept on writing and producing. You said he didn't have any plan, but he certainly kept going.

KALLEN. Yes. The man had no companions, he talked to himself. He talked to himself with a pen. And fortunately he had a publisher, Scribner's, who was ready to publish what he sent.

SCHNEIDER. But he gave me the impression, in Rome at least, that he had to work every morning. He called it work, and he didn't talk as though he enjoyed writing. But he had to do his work in the morning, and in the afternoon he was free. But he used to give me the impression that he worked hard every morning.

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MUNITZ. I've been trying to say there certainly was a plan when he wrote that essay on "Some Meanings of the Word *Is*"; he certainly had the nucleus, pattern of the whole realm of essence, and it took him many years to—

KALLEN. Well, he had had that for a long time. It's implicit even in the *Sense of Beauty*.

MUNITZ. Professor Kallen, would you say that on the whole the main ideas of the later works were already there and significant for him in the earlier ones?

KALLEN. I think they were implicit. I think that fundamental changes or alterations didn't take place; I think there were shifts of emphasis; but that there's a continuous movement, an unbroken one, from the first position in *The Life of Reason* to the last one in *The Realm of Essence, Realm of Matter, Realm of Spirit*.

MUNITZ. He had some very strong reservations about *The Life of Reason* in what he had to say towards the end of his life; in looking back on it he thought it was rather poor.

KALLEN. Well, of course, having become something that had entered the tradition, he had to reject it.

SCHNEIDER. Yes. But he gave me the impression once of feeling as though he were starting something new. After *The Realm of Essence* appeared, one day he was really bubbly—effervescent—and said, "Well, I've got a toy now, and I like to play with it. At last I've got a system, and I play with my system like a child." But that seemed to him then to be something brand-new, as a system. I don't know whether it was, but I know he talked that way.

KALLEN. I wouldn't know. I don't myself get the feel of anything brand-new, but you know you get a—just a new feeling of the same thing, and from your own inner perception it may be brand-new, and to everybody else may be stale.

He could be gay and cheerful and un-malicious, and then all at once there would be a sideswipe at the prey, like a cat on somebody; and it would haul you up short.

LAMONT. He worked every morning while you were in Rome, Herbert, and then he relaxed in the afternoon. Did you ever see him in the evening?

SCHNEIDER. He might have read in the evening what he wrote in the morning. I wouldn't be surprised. Towards the end, when I think he began to show his age a little—I hadn't seen him for a long while—he said, "Oh, you're from Columbia!" I said yes. "Well, you fellows from Columbia will never understand me. You still talk about me as a naturalist, and I'm *not* a naturalist." And he was quite insistent, and he blamed us as a group—

RANDALL. Well, he took that line with me, of course, too, and I've never been able to find out how seriously he meant that. He said, "I *hate* nature!"

NAGEL. These remarks of Santayana's that nobody at Columbia understood him, do you think they were his way of saying that Dewey was sort of representing Columbia and Dewey would not understand him? Santayana called himself a materialist, not a naturalist, and I think his criticism of Dewey was that he didn't really respect matter.

SCHNEIDER. Well, of course Dewey irritated him by calling him a half-hearted naturalist, you see. And he'd want to go the whole hog if he *were* a naturalist. "No," he said, "I'm a—" I don't know how he characterized it, but he meant that he had the essence of romantic idealism in him, and he was putting it in reverse.

LAMONT. Is it true that Santayana would get the reviews from his publishers and throw them in the wastepaper basket without reading them?

KALLEN. Yes, in my experience, it's true. The publisher would send the reviews, but he wouldn't pay any attention to them. He did pay attention to direct statements from colleagues, but not clippings.

MUNITZ. I was rather amused because it doesn't quite coincide with the remark he made in response to my sending him what was actually my first printed piece in the *Columbia Review*—when I reviewed *Obiter Scripta,* as I recall—and there was also a review by

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John Dewey of *The Last Puritan*. I remember he thanked me for sending it to him because he "so rarely gets the opportunity of seeing reviews" that he's delighted to get evidence of some notice in print of his books!

KALLEN. Well, that's a very different thing, Milton, from a bunch of newspaper clippings from a clipping bureau.

RANDALL. After you had left, did he take the reviews *out* of the wastebasket?

SCHNEIDER. I had one letter from Santayana that really should be published. I sent him *The Puritan Mind,* and he apparently read a good deal of it, wrote me a long letter, and said, "This book bothers me." He said something nice about it, but he said, "According to you, Emerson isn't a Puritan! And you use "Puritan" quite differently from the way I do." Then he gave a definition of Puritan which was wonderful from his point of view, and of course fitted Oliver perfectly. But he regarded Emerson as the embodiment of Puritanism and said he wasn't much interested in the Puritans in the narrower sense the way I described them. And he had a very nice paragraph on "the omnificence of God."

LAMONT. Jack, didn't you visit Santayana a couple of times in Rome?

RANDALL. Yes, we were in Rome in 1934 during Easter week, and I saw him three or four times. One thing impressed me at that time, that he was most anxious to know all about the United States and what everybody thought about him there. It was hard for me to shift the conversation in other directions, and he seemed to be very much oriented towards America.

SCHNEIDER. But when Walter Lippmann came over there, you remember what he said to him?

LAMONT. No.

SCHNEIDER. Walter Lippmann went over to visit him, and he made a luncheon date with him, and apparently Santayana forgot it. Lippmann sat a long while there waiting for him, and finally he had them telephone up to the room; and Santayana came down and

apologized, said he forgot, and went in to luncheon. And he said to Walter Lippmann, "Well, has anything happened in the world that I ought to know about? You are *The World's* editor!" And Lippmann was rather taken aback. He said, "Why I guess not!"

RANDALL. Was President Eliot at all close to any of the Harvard philosophers?

KALLEN. Oh, yes. He was a Unitarian, you know, and for his time an extraordinarily liberal and open-minded one. And usually he took recommendations if they came from the department, and he took them from James and Palmer, and perhaps in the beginning more Palmer than James. Now James wanted to push Santayana, and apparently Eliot delayed it.

LAMONT. How about Lowell? Did he have any relation with Santayana?

KALLEN. I don't know. All I know about Lowell is— Oh, I know two stories about him; but I don't know whether that would indicate an attitude towards Santayana or not. One story is that somebody was talking about the various departments of Harvard, and they were discussing the Department of Philosophy and saying, "That's all hot air." And Lowell retorted immediately, "At least it's hot!"

And the second story that I know is that an overseer had suggested the appointment of a somewhat notorious liberal to Harvard in the Department of Philosophy; and Lowell said to him, "You know at Harvard we have academic freedom, and we have to be very careful whom we appoint."

SCHNEIDER. I got the impression that Santayana, with all his Catholicism, which he liked to talk about, never went to church and didn't like church. I don't know whether he *never* went, but—

KALLEN. Well, I think he went. I think that as a schoolboy in the Latin School and when he was an undergraduate at Harvard, he went, but he went with his sister, or from a sense of duty, but he went.

RANDALL. He went in Avila with his family.

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KALLEN. Well, that is a routine which didn't matter. It mattered to the family as the sort of thing you do.

SCHNEIDER. I happened to call on him the afternoon of the day before Christmas, and I excused myself a little early because I said I wanted to go down to Ara Coeli and see the children say their poems to the Christ child in the crib. There was quite a wonderful ceremony there on Christmas Eve. And he looked at me and he said, "Well, I'm amazed at you. You go to things like that? I call such things blushy."

KALLEN. Yes. Well, I think a lot of things that he stopped doing were operative in his memory in a variety of ways, and they got restated and transvalued in outer expression. I should say it is not that he loved Catholicism less but that he hated Protestantism more.

LAMONT. Do you have a firm opinion, Horace, as to Santayana's place in the history of philosophy?

KALLEN. I think anybody's place in the history of philosophy is a matter of accident.

LAMONT. Well, now, you don't really believe *that*?

KALLEN. I really do believe that. Somebody gets picked up; he has vocal and persuasive disciples; a school gets set up; reports are written—they may be forgotten and lost altogether, or they may be carried on by organizations of power, the way Shakespeare is carried on, the way the Bible used to be carried on. Who reads the Bible now since the Church has lost control of education? And who would be reading Shakespeare now if there were not entrance examinations for college requiring the reading of two or three of Shakespeare's plays? The vehicles of communication and the relevancy of selected material are what makes the difference. What was Peirce's place in the history of philosophy? What was it in 1910? And then along came these kids who were sure that they knew more about Peirce than Dewey or James did, and provided the correct view of Peirce, having edited his works; and Peirce now has a vogue. Well, why does he have a vogue? Why Plato or Aristotle or anybody? Somebody chooses to push the damn thing. The Madison Avenues of the world keep working.

LAMONT. Yes, but there has to be something to push.

KALLEN. Well, of course there's something to push. But the place is made by the pusher, not by the pushed.

GUTMANN. Outside the current American histories of recent philosophy, does Santayana figure in historical literature of the Continent to any extent?

RANDALL. There's quite a section on him in Abbagnano's *History of Philosophy*.

SCHNEIDER. Well, I think one book that should go down in the history of philosophy is *Skepticism and Animal Faith*. I think it is really a historical book.

KALLEN. That appeals to you?

SCHNEIDER. Not so much because it appeals to me; it seems to me it has a place in history. That's what I was trying to suggest.

KALLEN. You're assigning it a place in history. Whether it will have the place you assign it is in the lap of the gods; and the gods have an awfully wiggly lap.

LAMONT. But here you have the added quality of a remarkable literary style which is a factor in making a writer live, surely; and on this ground Santayana would presumably live longer than Dewey.

KALLEN. Then Hegel would have died long ago and F. C. S. Schiller would have been much more alive; Kant would never have been born; and Hume would have signified in an extraordinary way.

SCHNEIDER. Well, from that point of view, Corliss, I think that Santayana was right in saying that he was the last of the Victorians, don't you? As a writer?

KALLEN. Well, I'd say I'm hopeful.

MUNITZ. In terms of his staying power as measured by the paperbacks, at any rate at the present time, he seems to be doing rather

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well. He's one philosopher who's likely to live for a considerable time, I should say.

KALLEN. In terms of paper-backs? How long?

MUNITZ. Well—

KALLEN. If a book, say like Will Durant's *Story of Philosophy,* becomes an accepted, widely accepted, textbook in the schools, where he had reference to Santayana, Santayana would be carried by that reference. If on the other hand, Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy*—which is not so good as Will Durant's, in my judgment—is the textbook, how long do you suppose Santayana would be carried? If you have the two competing, well, you may have choices.

NAGEL. My guess would be that Santayana would never appeal to people whose interest in philosophy is primarily technical. Of course it doesn't lend itself to that kind of emphasis.

KALLEN. Well, the translation into the language of the technicians should be an appealing task to somebody, and may so become. The chief thing is that the idiom is so different, it's another language. It's like saying that a man who writes in Greek wouldn't appeal to a man who writes in English.

SCHNEIDER. For years I liked to read and reread the *Dialogues in Limbo.* I thought that was his best writing. But the last time I picked them up they didn't go so well. I don't know why.

KALLEN. Take them to bed with you.

SCHNEIDER. I think one of the things I like best is his chapter on Distraction in *The Realm of Spirit.*

MUNITZ. I think an interesting question might be to consider whether Santayana was the kind of philosopher or writer who would continue to exert an influence as a philosopher if he were not made available by somebody in the academic world who, for example, would use him as a text in a course and would manage to convey something of what he thought to be the importance of Santayana. Now, for example, men like Morris Cohen or Woodbridge certainly played that role for many of us. And I'm interested

in knowing whether there are any people who take Santayana, so to speak, independently of that; and I wonder whether, for example in England, perhaps, one of the reasons why he is not as well known is because of the fact that he does not serve in that way as the subject matter for a course.

SCHNEIDER. Well, I think it's unfortunate he's out of style—from a literary point of view he's certainly out of style now. But I imagine he'll come back.

KALLEN. He'll come back like Henry James.

SCHNEIDER. Yes, he'll come back, I'm sure.

LAMONT. I wonder how Santayana sounds in a foreign language. I've never seen a translation myself.

KALLEN. I wonder if there's any translation of him into Spanish, and how he would read in Spanish, because there's a kind of cadence. Curious. I think about Conrad, and I think about Israel Zangwill, people whose primary language was not English, and who developed a kind of distinction of style—quite personal—and with a color that is quite different from the color of writers whose natural and mother tongue was English. Now Santayana really didn't learn to speak or use English until he was nine years old. Conrad was much older. And Zangwill must have been in England but grew up in a Yiddish-speaking town.

SCHNEIDER. Where was it Santayana said his ambition was to say in good English the most un-English thing?

MUNITZ. "A Brief History of My Opinions."

LAMONT. What do you mean, Santayana's out of style so far as literary form—?

SCHNEIDER. That kind of a style isn't popular now.

KALLEN. So far as I can see, he never was in style in this country. When I was growing up, certainly the preferences were for the quick, short, sharp sentence, uncadenced; and the line from O. Henry to Hemingway was the true line. In many ways you put Santayana alongside of Emerson and Henry James—not *William,*

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but *Henry*—and the patterning, cadence—it's like Bach, you know.

SCHNEIDER. It must have hurt Santayana that William James should have been such a literary success.

KALLEN. Well, people read William James with a certain—

SCHNEIDER. He's very much more in style.

KALLEN. Much more in style, yet Santayana's a better writer, much more controlled and patterned right. I say *control*; I don't mean the control was *in* him, but the impression is he had control.

SCHNEIDER. I think his conversation had even more sparkle than his writing.

KALLEN. The writing does not have sparkle. It has grace and smoothness. The conversation—

SCHNEIDER. But in conversation his eyes—

KALLEN. The eyes sparkled, there was that slight gurgle, that smile; the teeth flash, and then you get asides and askances, and you feel that this man is lifting curtains and dropping them. It's a kind of magic as you talk with him that isn't present in the written thing. But what is present in the written thing is—serious. Even when he's wittiest and most malicious, it's serious.

SCHNEIDER. You know I happened to pick up his description of the occasion when he read that essay on "The Unknowable" at Oxford. He said, "The only light in the room was the light in my eyes!"

LAMONT. Well, I wonder if you'd want to sum up, Horace?

KALLEN. Well, what is there to sum up?

MUNITZ. From what you said earlier.

KALLEN. The summary is the accident.

RANDALL. What would Santayana have become if he hadn't got tangled up with Boston?

KALLEN. That reminds me of Russell's question: What would have become of the history of mankind if Cleopatra's nose had been half an inch longer?

LAMONT. Yes. Suppose Santayana had taught first at Columbia?

KALLEN. Or if Santayana had grown up in Spain, as he might have. If he had written in Spanish, he could have had at least the same quality of impact as Unamuno.

GUTMANN. Doesn't he say somewhere why he chose English?

KALLEN. Why, I think he grew up into it; it became the medium of communication and expression from his ninth year.

GUTMANN. Had he lost his capacity to write Spanish?

RANDALL. He wrote domestic Spanish; he couldn't write literary Spanish.

KALLEN. Yes, but had he ever tried? He didn't want to try so far as I could make out.

SCHNEIDER. I think he puts on a big façade about all the Spanish in him. I don't think he's Spanish at all. He isn't Latin either, he's just a good American.

RANDALL. Yes. I don't know whether if it hadn't been for Harvard he would have had anything.

SCHNEIDER. I don't think he's a product of Harvard.

KALLEN. I think he's much more readily assimilable to Emerson than he is to Europeans.

MUNITZ. Don't you think he's at least as Latin as Berenson?

RANDALL. The last of the Genteel Tradition.

KALLEN. The earlier Santayana poems, in the Latin School *Register*, which he wrote when he was a boy, seem exactly like A. E. Housman's, exactly the same meter. It sounds like a proleptic parody.

SCHNEIDER. Well, talking of parodies, I have here a little philosophic parody that Santayana wrote.

GUTMANN. Was that in the *Journal of Philosophy*?

SCHNEIDER. Yes, I published it in the *Journal* a few years ago—in 1952. I have it framed in my office. I think it's very clever. I'll read it to you:

I thought, before I learned to think,
That bread was food and water drink,
But now I know that drink and food
Are simple phases of the good.
My need of nourishment makes meat
Out of such things as I can eat;
Only that drink is drink in act
Which irrigates my thirsty tract;
And because I am slaked and fed
Water is water and bread bread.
Pips, bones, and gristle and the rest,
Express my failure to digest.
My mind, with all in thought comprised,
Is just digestion realized;
The whole world else, beyond all question,
Is my projected indigestion.
How came it that so bright a youth
Ever could doubt this limpid truth?
Because, concerning food and drink,
I thought before I learned to think.[14]

KALLEN. Philosophy in the grand manner!

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[14]Santayana wrote this satire on subjectivism about 1926 as a comment on a paper by Professor Schneider entitled "Confessions of an Epistemological Neophyte," which made an analogy between sensation and digestion.

Writing in Class

By PHILIP O'CONNOR

"What do you think of England,
This country where no one is well?"
W. H. Auden

■ That England is a phenomenally class-bound country has come to the observation of the English especially since the war. Before the economic levelling processes of the "Welfare State" came into being, the classes had, of course, rubbed shoulders, and even shaken hands. But the depth of this camaraderie was to be tested by a fairly radical economic readjustment. The depth was found to be not very real. Manners of speech, clothes, and behavior that in the old days were an integral part of character now became defenses, offensives, or hedges between the classes; the questioning of the content of class segregation by means of economic alterations led to the deliberate exaggeration of the forms of such segregation. One small and significant sign of this was the heroic reappearance of the bowler hat, insignia of the professional and upper-middle classes: men appeared to stand by, and fight for, their bowlers.

Richard Hoggart, in his book *The Uses of Literacy* (Chatto, 1957) was thus provoked to identify what he believed to be true working class culture (which in England we sometimes use in the broadest sense, to include behavior) defending itself—not entirely successfully—against the encroachments of an amalgam of middle class and imported American sensationalism.

Nancy Mitford launched the concept of "U" and "Non-U," though the term itself came from Alan Ross. The rigidity of the behavior pertain-

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ing to the "U-types" (cultured, again in the broad sense) compares favorably with Indian caste exclusiveness. Only half humorously, there was an attempt to build up a concept of untouchability directed at the "Non-U" which included a very broad area of society—not only the working classes, but—and perhaps especially—the new middle class. By the new middle class I mean the large number of men who, by means of an increased accessibility of university education legislated for by the 1944 Education Act, were able to rise from the working class and state (unpaid) school level to that of the professional classes. John Brain, in his *Room at the Top*, amusingly describes the ruthlessness employed in the final stages of such elevation; the "Angry Young Men" protested as much against the impossibility of their final integration into the old middle classes (indicating the success of Miss Mitford's point of view) as, more glamorously, at the paucity of idealism among the establishments. Of the "Angries" Edwin Muir said to me, ". . . they give me the feeling that they don't know what they are angry about; the anger is like a sort of vague but persistent discontent." Doris Lessing, however, (one of the contributors to *Declarations,* a symposium of their views), is more explicit. In an *Observer* article she defines them as a group having lost all faith in the efficacy of authority—whether of the Left or the Right: which reverts, of course, to the old Liberalism. I think we shall find that the two protagonists in the mild show-down that our energies can afford will be between Liberalism and some kind of authoritarianism—from the Tories or the Labor Party.

Nevertheless, it is to me an inescapable conclusion that culturally the "Angry Young Men" serve as no kind of bridge between the cultured literateurs and the illiterate or semi-literate mass; how should they? Their aim is to escape from below. The proper division in our culture obtains between those who thrive (rather a metaphor!) upon our popular entertainment—TV, film, radio, and not strictly distinguishable from musicals leading to conventional theatre—and the shrinking body of what the Soviet critics disparagingly termed "the mandarins." It is a fact that the highbrow is laughable to the "common man"; the common man is less bravely disparaged by the highbrow, and is, whenever possible, invited into the fields of "literature." In this implausible battle, the common man has allies that he might, in sober moments, not be at all content with: the vulgar press. However, a subtle rider on this proposition is the fact that Lord Beaverbrook, remote controller of the press bearing his name, has also recently invested in a monthly on art and books. A study of this, however, would demonstrate the affinity of this kind of artistic concern with the press's disparagement of the highbrows; because the

Beaverbrook monthly is concerned with a kind of branding, a commodity concern with culture—for instance, praising and then forgetting its cultural hope, Colin Wilson.

This *should*, of course, bring us to view the question of integrity and taste to which the highbrows, mandarins, or what you will can fairly lay claim; I believe it to be not inconsiderable, but suffering merely from that lack of contemporary sensibility that suggests, not its demise, but a long period of illness.

There is, I think, no communication whatsoever between the world of mass entertainment and that of the contemporary exposition of traditional culture; in terms of noise, money, numbers, the world of entertainment wins hands down. Of our literary periodicals only one, as far as I know, makes ends meet; how much this is determined by its subsidy (I refer to *Encounter*, financed by the Ford Foundation) I don't know. I *do* suspect that it is very much determined by Stephen Spender's experimentation with "non-literary" work; only a man who has culture at heart can afford to be unconventional in his discoveries.

Nothing is more convincing than the personal experience; it was while teaching in a modern secondary school (i.e., free state school corresponding to your public schools) that my lack of communication with working class children was brought home to me. Nothing I tried (especially clowning!) could make the bridge. Why? The language was, technically speaking, the same; the experiences were diametrically opposed. The weight of language derives from the experience of the writer or speaker; experience can give opposite meanings to the same word. And the difference can be put in a word. Our traditional culture has reached the point of acceptance of individual isolation and is concerned with making it tolerable; the common man fears but does not accept isolation; his entertainment is concerned with making it impossible. In the farther reaches of the problem, it is the antipathy of striving for a heaven on earth—social advancement in a material sense—and the acceptance of heaven in heaven, according social progress a secondary place, and supporting it only for ethical reasons—not for those of "hunger and love." Because the common man can be more religious in the superficial, church-going sense, he is immune to "true religion," to spiritual concerns. He seizes the community offerings to reject the spiritual intoxicants of isolation.

The beginning of this dichotomy—or let me say its major incidence in my lifetime—was in the 'thirties. For the two best studies of this I would suggest Richard Hoggart's essay on W. H. Auden and Spender's autobiography, *World Within World*. In the latter, Spender describes a

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classic experience of this lack of communication between men of different classes, men of "two cultures." He befriends an ex-Guardsman called "Jimmy Younger," and their relationship became, he says, "a social phenomenon with an entirely public aspect." In his formative years Spender says that this lack of communication between himself and working class people was his greatest frustration. When he, in common with Auden, Isherwood, and, to a less extent, MacNeice and Day Lewis, were attempting to bridge the gulf by means of political participation in the anti-fascist struggles of the period, he nevertheless saw his future. In his poem "Vienna," published in 1934, he writes: "I continued my travels through an unknown, mental country."

Spender avoided the temptations of "objectivity"—i.e., what we may call the *subjective* rejection of all subjectivity, as though the writer were a recording machine quite uninfluenced by the matter recorded. Auden wrote that the poet must be "clinical"—and the romanticism of this may be apparent. Hence, Spender remains, in writing, less remote from the world, less defeated by, for him, an ideal that was never as abstract as Auden's. The result of Auden's attitude is well known. In 1948 (*Poets at Work*) he wrote: "From now on the only popular art will be comic art . . . and this will be unpopular with the management. . . . What is not comic will either be highbrow or popular or official magic." Of Auden, Hoggart writes in his essay, mentioned above: ". . . though he has a profound concern for ordinary people, he lacks certain insights into the nature of their lives . . . this lack is connected with his special regard for the . . . exceptional men." But the exceptional man, as such, is a popular concept—c.f., Shaw's "A great man is a small man's idea of himself."

Auden's poetry has become a lament—perhaps our best—to the impossibility of communication—not only between men of different classes but (the corollary of this) between individuals of any class. I would myself link this isolation with Pauline Christianity—upon which I cannot enlarge here, however. Suffice it to suggest that communication between individuals and God precludes communication between man and man. Auden has joined the Anglican church; conversions have, indeed, been popular among writers, in the tide receding from the social optimism of the 'thirties which continues. Again, to make community an ideal is an investment against its materialization; and ensures the opposite.

We have nothing comparable to your "Beat" writers; in one sense, they would seem demodé to us; we have our vintage desperations, or the French imports of them—after Rimbaud, indeed, what could there be in that direction? Beckett, for all his wit—because of it—has shown us:

nothing. English literature cannot properly contain expressions of desperation; our social services tend to impede the physical disintegration of Englishmen, and we are canny enough not entirely to have separated that from moral or spiritual desperation. That, I would say, was one of our saving graces.

But we have some authentic accounts of working and criminal class life. Frank Norman, for instance, (whom I've met—a man with all the guarded conventionality of the ex-wide boy) writes with extraordinary talent and humor in his *Bang to Rights*, an account of prison experiences, and is well on the way to becoming our English Runyon. He has an honesty ably protected by a lack of culture. I quote from a piece in *Encounter*:

> One day I got a letter from this geezer in the publishers racket, in it he told me that he had sold part of my book to some magazine called *Encounter*. . . . Well, naturally this was a great surprise to me, because quite apart from anything else my spelling is real murder. . . . One day I got a buzz on the blower from Stephen Spender asking me to come out to lunch. . . .

But does this imply a break-through from the working class to the middle? No; it is a leak, like the trickle of water you see through the lockgates of a dam. I'd even suggest that D. H. Lawrence, especially in his poems, was a more truly working class writer: a matter of perception more than phraseology. And of course, no working class writer has the effrontery to appear to be illiterate: he would go to night school and write—I fear—a properly spelt and very wooden treatise. Mr. Norman breaks through individually—and as a first-class story-writer. He will leave his playmates, with whom anyway he never played happily.

There is also Bill Naughton, whose work I know only from a short story; Mr. Naughton is another matter (one story is enough!). He is nearer to Lawrence; sober, with no extravagances of illiteracy and, as it happens, an old practitioner.

There is also Mr. Brendan Behan, about whom opinion is divided. Judging by the reception of his second play, *Hostage*, at the Stratford-atte-Bow Theatre, the local (East-End) audience is in favor, while the middle class connoisseurs of "authentic working class writing" tend to regard him as a self-selling Irishman. He has (judging by *The Quare Fellow*) the true thing; what he'll do with it is another matter—it, of course, always is. As New Yorkers may know, *The Quare Fellow* was magnificently authentic, and emotionally economical to the ultimate degree of wit.

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The future trend? I think, on the whole, that the majority of Englishmen are tired of their class-enforced isolation; it has long been highbrow to appreciate (not always genuinely) "vulgar" entertainment; the converse proposition is less common. Because even in competition, the common man is social; and even in society, the cultured man is isolated. The pressures of economics, technics, politics are greater than those of tradition; the present wins, however slowly, and the need to communicate is *basic*: not all the psychic gymnastics in the world can compensate for the togetherness of man which is of the very essence of his nature. By now, we know this; our writing will express it in due course.

Let the final word be with Auden: ". . . since art by its nature is shared, a catholic activity, he (the artist) is the first to feel the consequences of a lack of common beliefs, and the first to seek a basis for human unity." To which one may add that common beliefs spring from common interests—in the strictest sense of that last word.

Pragmatic History

The Americans: The Colonial Experience. By Daniel J. Boorstin. Random House, 1958. $6.00.

It is remarkable that half a century has elapsed between the heyday of William James and the appearance of a book that weds pragmatism to the writing of American history. This is achieved, with often startling results, in Professor Boorstin's new volume on colonial times, the first of a trilogy that will encompass our history down to the present. The publishers, proud of the magnitude of this undertaking, advertise it as the first major reinterpretation of the American past since Turner, Parrington, and Beard.

Throughout the book there are evidences of the pragmatic stance. Professor Boorstin speaks of the virtue of being guided by the give-and-take between ideas and experiences, he says that the acid of everyday experience is the most corrosive of all tests, and he praises the dissolving of boundaries between theory and practice. About midway through the book, we infer that, as a matter of fact, pragmatism originated in colonial times. The tone of a long section (in which both James and Mr. Justice

Holmes are quoted) on this point is best conveyed by the following excerpts:

> The most fertile novelty of the New World was . . . its new concept of knowledge. . . . Men in the New World found unsuspected possibilities in life everywhere. . . . Men here were more interested in the elaboration of experience than in the elaboration of "truth." . . . Americans listened to the dictates of "self-evidence." Before long this appeal to self-evidence became a distinctive popular epistemology. . . . In America what seemed to be needed was not so much a new variant of European "schools" of philosophy as a philosophy of the unexpected. . . . It was less important that the mind be elegantly furnished than that it be open and unencumbered. . . . To act, to move on, to explore meant also to push back the frontiers of knowledge; this inevitably gave a practical and dynamic character to the very idea of knowledge. To learn and to act became one.

When Professor Boorstin applies his enthusiasms to colonial history, some impacts are jarring to liberal historiography, especially to Parrington's findings. The Puritans were, above all, men of action. Because they were superbly certain of their orthodoxy, they avoided the sterility of theological debate, and were free to build new towns, to enforce the laws, and to fight off Indians. In other words, they resisted utopianism and were able to concentrate on "human and practical problems" because their basic theoretical questions had been settled. If this admiration for the Puritans is already a wide departure from Parrington, the rehabilitation of Cotton Mather is equally striking. In Parrington, Mather is a vain neurotic who is steadily opposed to all democratic movements. In Boorstin, he is a prototype of Benjamin Franklin, he is the author of the first general colonial treatise on medicine, and, as an empiricist, he carries on an heroic war against stuffy medical tradition, and heads off smallpox in Boston by inoculation. To this latter topic, Parrington grudgingly gave three sentences, while Professor Boorstin finds it worth five pages. He remarks that "the ill-informed hatred of generations of liberal historians" has been focused on Mather, and he praises the efforts of Samuel Eliot Morison and Perry Miller to brighten up Parrington's dark view of the Puritans.

The Quakers, long the darlings of many American liberals, do not have Professor Boorstin's respect. Some of them, suffering from a compulsion towards martyrdom, returned again and again to Massachusetts to seek eternal glory, until at length the patience of the reasonable Puritans, who only wanted to be left alone to perfect their own Zion, was exhausted and the expected thing happened. In Pennsylvania the Quaker pacifists, having failed to deal realistically with the Indian prob-

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lem on the frontier, finally became a minor power in politics. Just as the author hails the Puritans for their flexibility in adapting to New World conditions, so he condemns the Quakers for their suicidal rigidity, especially in politics. Some readers will reflect that this seems dangerously close to saying that what has survived in history is good.

Professor Boorstin's advocacy of pragmatism as an American product is in consonance with the patriotic tone of his writing. If one pillar of the book is pragmatism, the other is a reconstruction of Turner's frontier theory. The author says at the outset that social dreams made in Europe were dissipated, unsettled, or transformed by "the American reality." This is paying as much tribute to the power of the frontier as Turner did when he wrote that the wilderness, mastering the colonist, snatched him from the railroad car and put him in the birch canoe. The physical vastness of the frontier made a new thing of the Anglican Church, to instance just one altered European institution. Virginians, who, adjusting to soil conditions, sensibly planted tobacco, were different from the doctrinaire founders of Georgia, who, taking no account of nature there, were foolishly determined to raise silk. At the end of his celebrated essay, Turner catalogued the intellectual traits brought out by the frontier; Boorstin takes a similar position when he observes that "the flavor of American life was compounded of risk, spontaneity, independence, initiative, drift, mobility, and opportunity." Spontaneity and the experimental spirit, he says, were the real spiritual wealth of America.

The disparagement of the European background of American history is as pronounced as is the emphasis on the frontier. One apparent exception is the acknowleged extent to which the Puritans borrowed from English legal precedent, but of this Professor Boorstin says that they took a consciously pragmatic approach to the common law. He seems to believe that the appeal to self-evidence, as in the Declaration of Independence, was an American invention, and that Descartes, Locke, and other Europeans had little or nothing to do with the matter. And the social philosophers of Europe contributed little to the revolutionary sentiments of the Virginia aristocrats: these sentiments were largely the product of experience in the New World.

As a pragmatist and a nationalist, Professor Boorstin has, in fact, no use for the European Enlightenment, which was "little more than the confinement of the mind in a prison of 17th- and 18th-century design." Europe, already weighed down with systems of thought, was not liberated by the Enlightenment, since it was merely an anti-system. "One of the ways in which American experience liberated the New World was by freeing men from the notion that every grand institution needed a grand

foundation of systematic thought." The author is as much opposed to Europe's aristocratic modes of thought as he is to her "systems." He asks whether American culture must be measured by its ability to produce belles-lettres, "the monuments of aristocratic cultures," and suggests that the American emphasis on relevance, utility, reader-interest, and catholicity of appeal points to the journalist as our culture-hero. He notes that in Europe, where a liberal education was limited to an exclusive few, the Enlightenment itself was monopolized by an aristocracy of philosophers and scientists.

Professor Boorstin's democratic and pragmatic commitments make him skeptical about the more elaborated products of the human mind: "America lacked enthusiasm for the man of profound, detached, and 'pure' intelligence. A wholesome fear of the exotic and the hieratic, of the power of the mind to raise any man above men, inspired American faith in the 'divine average.'" The peculiar promise of American colonial colleges lay in their numbers. The very literacy of the colonials inhibited an "ornamental literature" from a privileged class. Because England already supplied America with belles-lettres, "the colonists could enjoy the best of poetry without having to put up with a class of poets."

The author's comments on colonial science are sometimes aggressively anti-intellectual. He speaks as a primitivist when he contrasts American physicians, who often let nature take its course, with their European colleagues who, crushed by dogma and "systems," often prescribed the wrong cures. But does a pragmatist, aware of the power of the mind to analyze and channel natural processes, stand by and let nature take its course? Off on another tack, Professor Boorstin grants the value of "systems" in the development of astronomy and physics: "the physical scientist must come to his experience ready to organize it by a theory." And the anti-theoretical bias of colonial science stunted American contributions to astronomy and physics. Such was not the case with natural history, however:

> . . . the kind of new knowledge which life in America made possible, precisely because it was factual and miscellaneous, required no preliminary training. One could plunge in anywhere. Knowledge of the New World—its climate, geography, plants, animals, savages, and diseases—was accessible to everyone. . . . The American did not need to begin with explicit premises or with precise definitions and propositions; he began with the first novelty that came to his attention. If "knowledge" was miscellaneous, men could educate themselves with the random materials of experience. They could become "self-made" men, because they could start anytime anyplace.

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We also read that people have often contributed to natural history simply by keeping a notebook of miscellaneous items which have caught their attention, and that one example is Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle*. But does not Darwin testify to the organizing value of theory when he tells us how he was struck by Malthus' ideas on population? Professor Boorstin's animus against "systems" sometimes leads him into blind alleys which John Dewey himself was careful to avoid. For Dewey, the *interplay* between observation and theory was the desideratum, as the author himself makes clear in his more moderate moments.

Finally, Professor Boorstin proposes in his bibliographical essay a new method for writing American history. "It is peculiarly inappropriate, and can even be misleading," he asserts, "to try to sum up American thinking—much less American culture—through great philosophic systems or the literary and philosophic works of great men." The approach to America by way of such constructs as Puritanism, Rationalism, Romanticism, and Transcendentalism simply will not do. The author notes that many of his peers, such as Schneider, Persons, Miller, Curti, and Becker, frame their work in terms of these and other climates of opinion. "Some of my ablest and most learned colleagues," he writes, "think my view of American culture perverse, and even dangerous."

Here, then, is a book in the American grain. This is true of its revolt against formalism, of its obeisance to the frontier, of its rejection of Europe, of its celebration of the common man. Readers will judge Professor Boorstin's book in accordance with their convictions about these matters, which have long been crucial issues in the endless debate about American history.

Bard College —Fred A. Crane

Of, By, and For E. E. Cummings

The Magic-Maker: E. E. Cummings. By Charles Norman. Macmillan, 1958. $8.00.

E. E. Cummings: A Miscellany. Edited by George J. Firmage. The Argophile Press (200 East 32nd St., New York), 1958. $6.50.

95 Poems. By E. E. Cummings. Harcourt, Brace, 1958. $4.00.

Longinus, in the third century A.D., was the first critic to connect an author's life with his work. "It is impossible," he said, "that those whose lives are trivial and servile should flash out anything wonderful and worthy of immortality." Today, when criticism and much of our literature moves in an opposite direction, toward T. S. Eliot's prescription for an author's continual self-sacrifice and extinction of his personality, E. E. Cummings sticks out like a plum tree in an industrial landscape, an anachronism, an author who consistently and forcefully maintains that his work is himself, its stature his stature, its growth his growth. His conventions, as Allen Tate once pointed out, are personal. His poetry is primarily lyrical and subjective. The "heroes" in each of his prose works become completely intelligible only when viewed through him. Even the titles of his books, some blatantly self-centered, others reflecting his very special viewpoint, are all the unmistakable consequence of the "I" who is their maker. In the case of Cummings it is impossible to avoid Longinus' tie-up between the creator and his creations.

Charles Norman, a friend of Cummings for over thirty years, is the first man to tackle the very special problems that arise when writing a biography of such an egocentric personality. One of the difficulties is that Cummings has used so much of his biography in his own work: his six Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard, published under the title *i*, are themselves Cummings' attempt to answer the question "Who am I?"; practically every other piece of his (the exceptions are the few dramatic works) says forthrightly, "This I have experienced and these are my feelings and attitudes about it." Too, he is fundamentally isolated, self-sustaining and detached, and his outer life, at least since 1932 when he went to Russia, has contained no events of note. He has managed to avoid embroilment and entangling alliances with the world's affairs. The 1915 Harvard yearbook, for example, lists only one activity beneath his senior

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picture; and even during the years of the first world war and the twenties, the most publicly active of his life, when he was involved with bohemians, expatriates, dadaists, imagists, and publishers of little magazines, it was impossible to tag him with the Bohemian label or any other, for he never took on all the characteristics of anything but himself. The very word "group" is anathema to him. When he has ventured into public affairs, he has done so briefly, for a month or three, and written whole books about the experience—*The Enormous Room* and *Eimi*. Actually, much of what he has done has culminated in some sort of public performance: a book, a gallery showing of his paintings, the production of a play, or essays celebrating his preoccupation with burlesque, the circus, Gaston Laschaise, or "the new art." It is ironical that so much of a man who insists on the sacredness of privacy (how he has castigated "mostpeople" who live others' lives!) is a matter of public record.

Mr. Norman has got around these biographical difficulties by embracing them, and has used Cummings' own record as the basis of his book. Fully half of it, at a rough estimate, consists of excerpts from Cummings' work. Another large part is made up of critical or biographical comments by others, who have been neatly divided by Mr. Norman into Defenders and Detractors, good fellows and monstrous fools; Mr. Norman does not admit the possibility that a sensible person could ever have said a justified word against Cummings or his work. The record is expanded as Mr. Norman devotes big sections of some chapters to documents, transcripts of correspondence, with only a slight running commentary. As he follows Cummings' career, he calls frequently on the poet's acquaintances or other literary figures for what amounts, often, to testimonials. Less frequently, he describes people who moved in Cummings' milieu, or the milieu itself.

I make this list to indicate, first, that to anyone acquainted with Cummings' public performances reading large sections of this biography is like re-reading yesterday's newspapers, and, in addition, that the book is a rather jumbled potpourri frequently weak in perception. Mr. Norman's lack of discrimination in choosing and evaluating material leads him to sudden stops in his views of Cummings as he pursues some peripheral topic—an interesting but rather pointless portrait of Joe Gould; a long section on Ezra Pound that adds up to little as far as Cummings is concerned. Mr. Norman includes outlandish paens of praise, both his own and those of Cummings' friends, often for Cummings' least achievement; and he makes snide, even cruel, remarks about anyone who has dared to criticize any part of Cummings adversely.

Since Mr. Norman makes clear in his preface that he is not a critic,

a reader of *The Magic-Maker* should perhaps not expect critical acumen from him, but instead be grateful for whatever gems of information he has dug up. Thanks to him, we finally know what it was that Slater Brown said in those letters that caused him and Cummings to be imprisoned in the enormous room; we get to meet S. A. Jacobs, the unenviable typographer whose name appeared on so many of Cummings' early books. But the fact is that Mr. Norman *does* indulge in criticism throughout the book, meanwhile leaving the reader still curious about much vital biographical information. How has Cummings supported himself since 1917, when he held his first and only regular job, for three months? What have been his relations with women, the subject of so much of his work? Mr. Norman speaks only of Cummings' present wife, without even mentioning when they were married, and tells us almost in asides that Cummings was married twice before. But the most serious lack in the book is that it leaves us without a sound appraisal of Cummings' life and achievement.

When Longinus made his connection between the life and work of a writer, his stress was on quality and evaluation, but judgments in Mr. Norman's biography are so persistently adulatory that evaluative criticism can hardly be said to exist at all. One is not surprised if a biographer admires his subect, but it turns out that Mr. Norman is a downright hero-worshipper, assuming before he proceeded that Cummings' activities and work were immaculately conceived, brimful with unrelieved wonderfuls, redolent of immortality, flashing out with a light that is never trivial or servile.

Such, I think, is Cummings' own view of himself, despite the undertone of humility in his pronouncements. (He always describes himself as "our nonhero," especially when he is being most egocentric.) In Cummings, however, self-adulation does not mean merely snobbishness, as it has been called; it is also the cource of his intensity. No one less convinced of his own miraculousness could have been so compulsively consistent (and admirably so) in his fearless isolation, in his sense of wonder, or in his urge to make, experiment, and grow. But Mr. Norman's acceptance of Cummings' self-estimation piles frosting on frosting, dulling his own taste to the point where he can not sense that Cummings' personality, the dogged persistence of it, has led him not only to literary excellence but also to aesthetic mistakes, and has limited the scope and merit of his work. To say, as Mr. Norman does, that Cummings' "poems offer few difficulties when read aloud, either to the reader or the listener" is not only to warp fact (how can one read aloud the grasshopper poem, which Mr. Norman quotes only a few pages later?) but also to allow extravagant

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praise to obscure major questions about Cummings that ought to be answered. Unfortunately, the tone of this statement is typical of too many others in the biography.

Despite Cummings' consistent reduction of himself to the simplest, lowest denominator, declaring, as he often does, that he is a childlike and thoughtless lover of whatever is truly alive, a cogent (and interesting) study of him would have to be a complex affair, not merely an appreciation, which is the best description of *The Magic-Maker*. Such a study would have to recognize, for example, that Cummings *has* thought (contrary to his admonition, "Think twice before you think") and expressed his thoughts on many subects; and that his thoughts, like his literary conventions, demand study.

Consider one of the touchiest facets of his personality, his political views. When Cummings entered Russia in 1932 he disavowed any political motives, telling the authorities at the border, "I wish to go as myself." In so doing he was typically reducing himself to isolated, individualistic simplicity. *Eimi*, the result of that trip, is not primarily a political book, any more than Thoreau's *Walden* is a handbook for naturalists. Like *Walden*, *Eimi* is a book about a man's inner world, a celebration of natural miraculousness that is surrounded but not defeated by mechanized society. But it is inescapably a book that thinks about politics too, as do *The Enormous Room*, or Cummings' poems about Harding and F.D.R., or his "story" about Coolidge, or his essay on George Herriman's Krazy Kat, or his statements on the Ezra Pound case. What *does* that thought add up to?

In speaking of Cummings' defense of independent thought even in wartime, Mr. Norman calls him a liberal and goes on to say, "Those who have criticized him as politically ignorant or naïve can only have meant that he did not share their views." This curious remark is, to make an understatement, an overstatement. In some ways it is possible to describe Cummings as a liberal, and it is true that he has on occasion been attacked by persons who disagreed with him because their positions were fixed; but one must see also that Cummings' liberalism is mixed with a conservatism more rampant than that of the most far right wing Republican ever to be defeated for the Senate. Is there a politician left in the land who would attack the concept of social security? Cummings does; he is as persistent an anti-collectivist as Thoreau and, like Thoreau, he declares himself the world's foremost free enterpriser, a whalloping majority of one. Disaffiliation from social control, defense of one "merely human being," spill over frequently into virulent political attacks on democracy as practiced (the kind of democracy a citizen of the U.S.A.

must deal with, whether he likes it or not). Those who accept the dominion of government, who struggle for "security," Cummings condescendingly consigns to oblivion. The world belongs, he says, to the few who are alive, who can love. To note Cummings' running war with government is not necessarily to disparage his position but simply to see what makes him go. The error of neglecting to notice Cummings' reactionary side is equivalent to missing the complex nature of his prose, which combines a modern ironical, out-of-the-side-of-the-mouth, word coining delivery with an antique, nineteenth century style that would have made President Wilson proud. Such errors are inevitable when one views Cummings from an extreme critical position such as Mr. Norman's, which blusters: spit on my sidewalk, spit on me; love me, love my dog.

Perceptive, two-sided criticism of Cummings does exist. Men like John Peale Bishop, John Arthos, and Alfred Kazin have shown that it *is* possible to be sound and just about him, to avoid extremes, and to unravel his complexities. I suspect that more of such criticism will come with the passage of time and as more of Cummings' record becomes available to us. If we can't look to *The Magic-Maker* for such criticism, we can see that Mr. Norman's big accomplishment is his putting so much Cummings material in one place, some of it not heretofore accessible without Cummings' consent or without exhaustive research.

George J. Firmage's collection of Cummings' shorter prose, *E. E. Cummings: A Miscellany*, performs this same sort of task. It brings together in one place fifty or so pieces that a student of Cummings would formerly have had to dig deep into library files to find. Some, indeed, he might never have identified as Cummings at all—numerous *Vanity Fair* articles written under arch pseudonymns. Although *A Miscellany* ranges in time from Cummings' "commencement part," delivered at his graduation from Harvard in 1915, to the foreword of the catalog for a show of his paintings in 1957, it is not a complete collection of Cummings' shorter prose, which is too bad; I wonder why the three delightful fairy tales published in *Wake* were left out. Still, Mr. Firmage's collection is a fat bowl of fruit. It bunches together several of Cummings' manifesto-like "forewords," his epigrammatic "jottings," his early critical essays, satirical commentary in all sorts of forms, and speeches "from an unfinished play." The sources of publication range from the lofty gardens of *The Dial* to the unexplored orchards of *Junior League Magazine*. All of it is unmistakably Cummings. The book is important, however, less for its intrinsic value than for its interest as a collector's item; those who "collect Cummings" will want to get one of the few copies of this small edition to put on their shelves alongside other Cummings rarities; those

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whose interest in him is less intense will probably be satisfied to let this book go.

Cummings wrote quite regularly for the irrepressible *Vanity Fair* in the twenties, and more than half the essays in *A Miscellany* are the exuberant pieces he was commissioned to do for that magazine. Like most month by month journalism, these pieces go up and down in quality. Time, no matter what Cummings says in his foreword, has managed to kill off a few of these once-lively expressions: others are painfully lifeless because Cummings' humor boggled along at a deadly sophomoric *College Humor* level, as did so much satirical writing in that rambunctious decade. Cummings' commentaries must have been fun to read at the time, and they are still interesting in a documentary way, but I found it hard going to try to read more than a couple at one sitting.

On the other hand, the book contains some things that are among the best Cummings ever did: a wonderfully sensitive and significant analysis of George Herriman's Krazy Kat; the speech of St. Joan at the point of martyrdom, from the "unfinished play," which matches the fine dramatic power of his best work in the play *Him*; intermittent bursts of vibrant, convoluted, punning prose, like that in *The Enormous Room*, which lead one to intense agreement with a statement of John Carroll, quoted by Mr. Norman: "He was a witty sonofabitch." An odd book—a record of a man; a record, too, of his time.

Sandwiched between the May publication of *A Miscellany* and the November publication of the biography was some word from Cummings himself: *95 Poems*, a collection of the poems that have been appearing regularly in magazines since 1950, when *XAIPE*, his last book of verse appeared. Many of the poems in the new volume were published prior to 1954, when the big, theoretically "complete" *Poems: 1923-1954* was issued, but none of them was included in that volume.

95 Poems forms another step in the proof that Cummings is the only major poet writing today who can use words like "soul" or address his love "I love you much (most beautiful darling)" without the self-protection of irony or oblique apology of any sort. Even more than *XAIPE* (rejoice), *95 Poems* is predominantly lyrical, only a mere handful of the poems, such as "Thanksgiving (1956)," being devoted to criticism of the unworld that monopolized such large portions of earlier volumes. Cummings seems to be firmly entrenched in a pastoral period. The book sings joyously of natural phenomena; Cummings must be writing many more of his poems in the setting of his New Hampshire farm than in the old familiar Greenwich Village atmosphere. He describes rural scenes, writes of the activities of farmers, of love realized in a setting of

sunsets, haystacks, birds, and mountains. Ever since Cummings wrote the passage in which he greeted snow in *The Enormous Room*, these lovely, natural subjects have been, it seems to me, those he has handled with greatest power. Without wishing that he had never given us his trenchant satire, recognizing that even in this book his reverence is often set off against a contrasting hateful deadness, a reader of *95 Poems* sees clearly that straightforward lyricism is, and always has been, the best outlet for Cummings' poetic talent.

However, a volume of poetry is not a whole at all, but a collection of separate works; and to speak of this book with justice one should be able to compose 95 reviews. Lacking the opportunity to do that, I can say briefly that my own preference is usually for those single poems that make least use of Cummings' extreme personal conventions of typography. (I had thought that he was working away from them, as he seemed to be working away from caustic commentary on the unworld, but this book, more than *XAIPE*, actually *looks* like a Cummings work.) Cummings is not becoming simple, or easy. Even those poems that appear typographically normal are always stamped with his unmistakable fingerprints—with ellisions, inversions, twisted parts of speech, parenthetical statements within parenthetical statements, long open-ended sentences, packed strings of modifiers before nouns. Reading them is often no less intense a job than unraveling typographical acrostics that spell *round* when read backwards.

But as for me, as long as Cummings continues to put his highest linguistic and lyrical powers to work in such poems as the sonnet on love that ends:

> —do lovers love?why then to heaven with hell.
> Whatever sages say and fools,all's well.

—as long as he continues to write such poems, I say all's well.

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